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HANSARD'S
PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES:

Third Series;

COMMENCING WITH THE ACCESSION OF

WILLIAM IV.

5° VICTORIÆ, 1842.

VOL. LX.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM

THE THIRD DAY OF FEBRUARY,

TO

THE THIRD DAY OF MARCH, 1842.

First Volume of the Session.

LONDON:

THOMAS CURSON HANSARD, PATERNOSTER ROW;

LONGMAN AND CO.; C. DOLMAN; J. RODWELL; J. BOOTH; HATCHARD AND SON; J. RIDGWAY; CALKIN AND BUDD; R. H. EVANS; J. BIGG AND SON; J. BAIN; J. M. RICHARDSON; P. RICHARDSON; ALLEN AND CO.; R. BALDWIN; AND CRADOCK AND CO.

1842.

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THE MINISTRY.

THE CABINET.

First Lord of the Treasury	Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel, Bart.
Lord Chancellor	Lord Lyndhurst.
President of the Council	Lord Wharncliffe.
First Lord of the Admiralty	Earl of Haddington.
Lord Privy Seal	Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry.
Home Secretary	Right Hon. Sir James Graham, Bart.
Foreign Secretary	Earl of Aberdeen.
Colonial Secretary	Lord Stanley.
President of the Board of Control	Lord Fitzgerald.
Secretary-at-War	Right Hon. Sir Henry Hardinge.
President of the Board of Trade	Earl of Ripon.
Chancellor of the Exchequer	Right Hon. Henry Goulburn.
Paymaster-General	Right Hon. Sir Edward Knatchbull, Bart.
(Without Office)	Duke of Wellington.

NOT OF THE CABINET.

Postmaster-General	Lord Lowther.
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	Lord Granville Somerset.
First Commissioner of Land Revenue	Earl of Lincoln.
Vice President of the Board of Trade and Master of the Mint	Right Hon. William Ewart Gladstone.
Master General of the Ordnance	Right Hon. Sir George Murray.
Attorney-General	Sir Frederick Pollock.
Solicitor-General	Sir William Webb Follett.

IRELAND.

Lord Lieutenant	Earl De Grey.
Lord Chancellor	Sir Edward Sugden.
Chief Secretary	Lord Eliot.
Attorney-General	Right Hon. Francis Blackburne.
Solicitor-General	Joseph Devonsher Jackson.

SCOTLAND.

Lord Advocate	Right Hon. Sir William Rae, Bart.
Solicitor-General	Duncan McNeil, Esq.

HOUSEHOLD APPOINTMENTS.

Lord Steward	Earl of Liverpool.
Lord Chamberlain	Earl De Lawarr.
Master of the Horse	Earl of Jersey.

ROLL OF THE
LORDS SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL,

IN THE *SECOND SESSION* OF THE *FOURTEENTH PARLIAMENT* OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN* AND *IRELAND.*

5° VICTORIÆ 1842.

His Royal Highness THE PRINCE OF WALES.

His Royal Highness ERNEST AUGUSTUS Duke of CUMBERLAND and TEVIOTDALE. *(King of Hanover.)*

His Royal Highness AUGUSTUS FREDERICK Duke of SUSSEX.

His Royal Highness ADOLPHUS FREDERICK Duke of CAMBRIDGE.

WILLIAM Archbishop of CANTERBURY.

JOHN SINGLETON Lord LYNDHURST, *Lord Chancellor.*

EDWARD Archbishop of YORK.

JOHN GEORGE Archbishop of ARMAGH.

JAMES ARCHIBALD Lord WHARNCLIFFE, *Lord President of the Council.*

WALTER FRANCIS Earl of DONCASTER (*Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry*), *Lord Privy Seal.*

BERNARD EDWARD Duke of NORFOLK, *Earl Marshal of England.*

EDWARD ADOLPHUS Duke of SOMERSET.

CHARLES Duke of RICHMOND.

GEORGE HENRY Duke of GRAFTON.

HENRY Duke of BEAUFORT.

WILLIAM AUBREY DE VERE Duke of ST. ALBAN'S.

FRANCIS GODOLPHIN D'ARCY Duke of LEEDS.

FRANCIS Duke of BEDFORD.

WILLIAM SPENCER Duke of DEVONSHIRE.

GEORGE Duke of MARLBOROUGH.

JOHN HENRY Duke of RUTLAND.

ALEXANDER Duke of BRANDON. *(Duke of Hamilton.)*

WILLIAM HENRY CAVENDISH Duke of PORTLAND.

WILLIAM Duke of MANCHESTER.

CHARLES Duke of DORSET.

HENRY PELHAM Duke of NEWCASTLE.

HUGH Duke of NORTHUMBERLAND.

ARTHUR Duke of WELLINGTON.

RICHARD PLANTAGENET Duke of BUCKINGHAM and CHANDOS.

GEORGE GRANVILLE Duke of SUTHERLAND.

HENRY Duke of CLEVELAND.

CHARLES INGOLDSBY Marquess of WINCHESTER.

GEORGE Marquess of TWEEDDALE. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

HENRY Marquess of LANSDOWNE.

GEORGE FERRARS Marquess TOWNSHEND.

JAMES BROWNLOW WILLIAM Marquess of SALISBURY.

JOHN ALEXANDER Marquess of BATH.

JAMES Marquess of ABERCORN.

FRANCIS CHARLES Marquess of HERTFORD.

JOHN Marquess of BUTE.

WILLIAM Marquess of THOMOND. *(Lord Tadcaster) (Elected for Ireland.)*

BROWNLOW Marquess of EXETER.

Spencer Joshua Alwyne Marquess of Northampton.

George Charles Marquess Camden.

Henry William Marq. of Anglesey.

George Horatio Marquess of Cholmondeley.

George Augustus Francis Marquess of Hastings.

Charles Marquess of Ailesbury.

George Thomas John Marquess of Westmeath. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

Frederick William Marquess of Bristol.

Archibald Marquess of Ailsa.

John Marquess of Breadalbane.

Robert Marquess of Westminster.

Constantine Henry Marquess of Normanby.

Charles Cecil Cope Earl of Liverpool, *Lord Steward of the Household.*

George John Earl De Lawarr, *Lord Chamberlain of the Household.*

John Earl of Shrewsbury.

Edward Earl of Derby.

Francis Theophilus Henry Earl of Huntingdon.

Robert Henry Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery.

William Earl of Devon.

Thomas Earl of Suffolk and Berkshire.

William Basil Percy Earl of Denbigh.

John Earl of Westmoreland.

George Augustus Frederick Albemarle Earl of Lindsey.

George Harry Earl of Stamford and Warrington.

George William Earl of Winchilsea and Nottingham.

George Earl of Chesterfield.

Henry Earl of Thanet.

John William Earl of Sandwich.

Arthur Algernon Earl of Essex.

James Thomas Earl of Cardigan.

George Earl of Carlisle.

Walter Francis Earl of Doncaster. *(Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry.)* *(In another place as Lord Privy Seal.)*

Cropley Earl of Shaftesbury.

——— Earl of Berkeley.

Montagu Earl of Abingdon.

Henry Earl of Plymouth.

John Savile Earl of Scarborough.

William Charles Earl of Albemarle.

George William Earl of Coventry.

George Earl of Jersey.

John Earl Poulett.

George Sholto Earl of Morton. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

Cospatrick Alexander Earl of Home. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

David Earl of Airlie. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

David Earl of Leven and Melville. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

Dunbar Jamer Earl of Selkirk. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

Thomas John Earl of Orkney. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

Francis William Earl of Seafield. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

Edward Earl of Oxford and Earl Mortimer.

Washington Earl Ferrers.

William Earl of Dartmouth.

Chas. Augustus Earl of Tankerville.

Heneage Earl of Aylesford.

George Augustus Earl Cowper.

Philip Henry Earl Stanhope.

Robert Earl of Harborough.

George Earl of Macclesfield.

George William Richard Earl of Pomfret.

James Earl Graham. *(Duke of Montrose.)*

George Edward Earl Waldegrave.

Bertram Earl of Ashburnham.

Charles Earl of Harrington.

John Charles Earl of Portsmouth.

Henry Richard Earl Brooke and Earl of Warwick.

George Robert Earl of Buckinghamshire.

Charles William Earl Fitzwilliam.

George Earl of Egremont.

Francis Earl of Guilford.

James Earl Cornwallis.

Charles Philip Earl of Hardwicke.

Henry Stephen Earl of Ilchester.

George John Earl De Lawarr. *(In another place as Lord Chamberlain of the Household.)*

WILLIAM Earl of RADNOR.

JOHN CHARLES Earl SPENCER.

HENRY GEORGE Earl BATHURST.

ARTHUR BLUNDELL SANDYS TRUMBULL Earl of HILLSBOROUGH. (*Marquess of Downshire.*)

GEORGE WILLIAM FREDERICK Earl of CLARENDON.

HENRY Earl of ABERGAVENNY.

CHARLES CHETWYND Earl TALBOT.

JOHN Earl STRANGE. (*Duke of Athol.*)

ERNEST AUGUSTUS Earl of MOUNT EDGECUMBE.

HUGH Earl FORTESCUE.

EDWARD Earl of DIGBY.

GEORGE Earl of BEVERLEY.

DAVID WILLIAM Earl of MANSFIELD.

HENRY JOHN GEORGE Earl of CARNARVON.

CHARLES CECIL COPE Earl of LIVERPOOL. (*In another place as Lord Steward of the Household.*)

GEORGE Earl CADOGAN.

JAMES HOWARD Earl of MALMESBURY.

FRANCIS WILLIAM Earl of CHARLEMONT. (*Lord Charlemont.*) (*Elected for Ireland.*)

STEPHEN Earl of MOUNT CASHELL. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

JOHN Earl of MAYO. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

WILLIAM Earl of WICKLOW. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

GEORGE CHARLES Earl of LUCAN. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

JAMES Earl of BANDON. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

JAMES DUPRÈ, Earl of CALEDON. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

JAMES ALEXANDER Earl of ROSSLYN.

WILLIAM Earl of CRAVEN.

ARTHUR GEORGE Earl of ONSLOW.

CHARLES Earl of ROMNEY.

HENRY THOMAS Earl of CHICHESTER.

THOMAS Earl of WILTON.

EDMUND HENRY Earl of LIMERICK. (*Lord Foxford.*) (*Elected for Ireland.*)

EDWARD Earl of POWIS.

HORATIO Earl NELSON.

ARCHIBALD Earl of GOSFORD. (*Lord Worlingham.*) (*Elected for Ireland.*)

CHARLES WILLIAM Earl of CHARLEVILLE. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

CHARLES HERBERT Earl MANVERS.

HORATIO Earl of ORFORD.

CHARLES Earl GREY.

WILLIAM Earl of LONSDALE.

DUDLEY Earl of HARROWBY.

HENRY Earl of HAREWOOD.

GILBERT Earl of MINTO.

WILLIAM SCHAW Earl CATHCART.

JAMES WALTER Earl of VERULAM.

JOHN Earl BROWNLOW.

WILLIAM Earl of SAINT GERMANS.

EDMUND Earl of MORLEY.

GEORGE AUGUSTUS FREDERICK HENRY Earl of BRADFORD.

JOHN REGINALD Earl BEAUCHAMP.

RICHARD Earl of GLENGALL. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

THOMAS PHILIP Earl de GREY.

JOHN Earl of ELDON.

GEORGE HENRY Earl of FALMOUTH.

RICHARD WILLIAM PENN Earl HOWE.

JOHN SOMERS Earl SOMERS.

JOHN EDWARD CORNWALLIS Earl of STRADBROKE.

WINDHAM HENRY Earl of DUNRAVEN. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

CHARLES WILLIAM Earl VANE. (*Marquess of Londonderry.*)

WILLIAM PITT Earl AMHERST.

JOHN FREDERICK Earl CAWDOR.

GEORGE Earl of MUNSTER.

WILLIAM Earl of BURLINGTON.

ROBERT Earl of CAMPERDOWN.

THOMAS WILLIAM Earl of LICHFIELD.

GEORGE FREDERICK D'ARCY Earl of DURHAM.

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CHARLES Earl of YARBOROUGH.

JAMES HENRY ROBERT Earl INNES. (*Duke of Roxburghe.*)

THOMAS WILLIAM Earl of LEICESTER.

WILLIAM Earl of LOVELACE.

THOMAS Earl of ZETLAND.

GEORGE Earl of AUCKLAND.

Charles Noel, Earl of Gainsborough.
William Fitzhardinge, Earl Fitzhardinge.

Henry Viscount Hereford.
John Viscount Arbuthnott. *(Elected for Scotland.)*
James Viscount Strathallan. *(Elected for Scotland.)*
Henry Viscount Bolingbroke and St. John.
George Viscount Torrington.
Augustus Frederick Viscount Leinster. *(Duke of Leinster.)*
Henry Viscount Maynard.
John Robert Viscount Sydney.
Samuel Viscount Hood.
John Viscount De Vesci. *(Elected for Ireland.)*
Hayes Viscount Doneraile. *(Elected for Ireland.)*
Cornwallis Viscount Hawarden. (*Elected for Ireland.*)
Edward Jervis Viscount St. Vincent.
Robert Viscount Melville.
Henry Viscount Sidmouth.
Robert Edward Viscount Lorton. *(Elected for Ireland.)*
Warwick Viscount Lake.
George Viscount Gordon. *(Earl of Aberdeen.)*
Edward Viscount Exmouth.
Charles Viscount Gort. *(Elected for Ireland.)*
John Hely Viscount Hutchinson. *(Earl of Donoughmore.)*
William Carr Viscount Beresford.
William Thomas Viscount Clancarty. *(Earl of Clancarty.)*
Stapleton Viscount Combermere.
Charles John Viscount Canning.
Charles Viscount Canterbury.
John Viscount Ponsonby.

Charles James Bishop of London.
Edward Bishop of Durham.
Chas. Richard Bishop of Winchester.
Geo. Henry Bishop of Bath & Wells.
John Bishop of Lincoln.
William Bishop of St. Asaph.
Christopher Bishop of Bangor.
Hugh Bishop of Carlisle.
George Bishop of Rochester.
Edward Bishop of Llandaff.
John Bird Bishop of Chester.
Richard Bishop of Oxford.
James Henry Bishop of Gloucester, and Bristol.
Henry Bishop of Exeter.
Joseph Bishop of Ely.
Charles Thomas Bishop of Ripon.
Edward Bishop of Salisbury.
Edward Bishop of Norwich.
Thomas Bishop of Hereford.
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James Bishop of Lichfield.
Connop Bishop of St. David's.
Henry Bishop of Worcester.
Ashurst Turner Bishop of Chichester.
Thomas Bishop of Tuam, Killala and Achonry.
Richard Bishop of Derry and Raphæ.
Edmund Bishop of Limerick, Ardfert and Aghadoe.

William Lennox Lascelles Lord De Ros.
Jacob Lord Hastings.
George Edward Lord Audley.
Peter Robert Lord Willoughby D'Eresby.
Thomas Lord Dacre.
Henry Charles Lord Maltravers.
Charles Rodolph Lord Clinton.
Thomas Lord Camoys.
Thomas Miles Lord Beaumont.
William Lord Stourton.
Henry Lord Berners.
Henry Peyto Lord Willoughby De Broke.
George Lord Vaux, of Harrowden.
Henry Lord Paget.
St. Andrew Beauchamp Lord St. John of Bletso.
Charles Augustus Lord Howard de Walden.
George Harry Lord Grey of Groby.
William Francis Henry Lord Petre.
Gregory William Lord Saye and Sele.
Henry Benedict Lord Arundell of Wardour.

John Lord Clifton. *(Earl of Darnley.)*

Joseph Thaddeus Lord Dormer.

Henry Francis Lord Teynham.

George William Lord Stafford.

George Anson Lord Byron.

William Lord Ward.

Hugh Charles Lord Clifford of Chudleigh.

James Ochoncar Lord Forbes. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

Alexander George Lord Saltoun. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

Charles Lord Sinclair. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

John Lord Colville of Culross. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

Eric Lord Reay. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

John Lord Rollo. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

Edmund Lord Boyle. *(Earl of Cork and Orrery.)*

Thomas Robert Lord Hay. *(Earl of Kinnoul.)*

Digby Lord Middleton.

William John Lord Monson.

Henry Lord Montfort.

George William Frederick Lord Bruce.

Frederick Lord Ponsonby. *(Earl of Bessborough.)*

George John Lord Sondes.

Nathaniel Lord Scarsdale.

George Lord Boston.

Henry Edward Lord Holland.

George James Lord Lovel and Holland. *(Earl of Egmont.)*

George John Lord Vernon.

John Douglas Edward Henry Lord Sundridge. *(Duke of Argyll.)*

Edward William Lord Hawke.

Thomas Henry Lord Foley.

George Talbot Lord Dynevor.

Thomas Lord Walsingham.

William Lord Bagot.

Charles Lord Southampton.

Fletcher Lord Grantley.

George Lord Rodney.

John Lord Carteret.

William Lord Berwick.

John Lord Sherborne.

Henry James Montagu Lord Montagu.

Henry Lord Tyrone. *(Marquess of Waterford.)*

Hen. Lord Carleton. *(Earl of Shannon.)*

Edward Lord Suffield.

Guy Lord Dorchester.

George Lord Kenyon.

Richard Lord Braybrooke.

George Augustus Lord Fisherwick. *(Marquess of Donegal.)*

Archibald Lord Douglas of Douglas.

Henry Hall Lord Gage. *(Visc. Gage.)*

Edward Thomas Lord Thurlow.

George William Lord Lyttleton.

Henry Lord Mendip. *(Viscount Clifden.)*

Francis Lord Stuart of Castle Stuart. *(Earl of Moray.)*

Randolph Lord Stewart of Garlies *(Earl of Galloway.)*

James Thomas Lord Saltersford. *(Earl of Courtown.)*

George Alan Lord Brodrick. *(Viscount Midleton.)*

George Lord Calthorpe.

John Lord Rolle.

Richard Lord Wellesley. *(Marquess Wellesley.)*

Robert John Lord Carrington.

Henry William Lord Bayning.

William Powlett Lord Bolton.

William Lord Lowther

John Lord Wodehouse.

John Lord Northwick.

Thomas Atherton Lord Lilford.

Thomas Lord Ribblesdale.

John Lord Fitzgibbon. *(Earl of Clare.)*

Edward Wadding Lord Dunsany. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

Cadwallader Davis Lord Blayney. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

John Lord Carbery. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

Henry Lord Farnham. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

Robert Lord Clonbrock. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

Edward Lord Crofton. *(Elected for Ireland).*

Henry Lord Dunally. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

Henry Francis Seymour Lord Moore. *(Marquess of Drogheda.)*

John Loftus Lord Loftus. (*Marquess of Ely.*)

John Lord Carysfort. (*Earl of Carysfort.*)

William Lord Alvanley.

George Lord Abercromby.

John Thomas Lord Redesdale.

George Lord Rivers.

Edward Lord Ellenborough.

Arthur Moyses William Lord Sandys.

George Augustus Frederick Chas. Lord Sheffield. (*Earl of Sheffield.*)

David Montagu Lord Erskine.

Howe Peter Lord Mont Eagle. (*Marquess of Sligo.*)

Archibald William Lord Ardrossan. (*Earl of Eglintoun.*)

James Lord Lauderdale. (*Earl of Lauderdale.*)

George Arthur Hastings Lord Granard. (*Earl of Granard.*)

Hungerford Lord Crewe.

Alan Legge Lord Gardner.

Thomas Lord Manners.

John Lord Hopetoun and Niddry. (*Earl of Hopetoun.*)

Richard Lord Castlemaine. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

Thomas Lord Lynedoch.

Rowland Lord Hill.

James Andrew Lord Dalhousie. (*Earl of Dalhousie.*)

George Lord Meldrum. (*Marquess of Huntly.*)

George Lord Ross. (*Earl of Glasgow.*)

William Willoughby Lord Grinstead. (*Earl of Enniskillen.*)

Edmund Henry Lord Foxford. (*In another place as Earl of Limerick.*)

Francis Almeric Lord Churchill.

William Lord Melbourne. (*Viscount Melbourne.*)

William George Lord Harris.

Algernon Lord Prudhoe.

Charles Lord Colchester.

William Schomberg Robert Lord Ker. (*Marquess of Lothian.*)

Francis Nathaniel Lord Minster, (*Marquess Conyngham.*)

John Lord Ormonde. (*Marquess of Ormonde.*)

Francis Charteris Wemyss Lord Wemyss.

Robert Lord Clanbrassil. (*Earl of Roden.*)

Robert Lord Kingston. (*Earl of Kingston.*)

Edward Michael Lord Silchester. (*Earl of Longford.*)

George Augustus Frederick John Lord Glenlyon.

William Lord Maryborough.

Thomas Henry Lord Oriel. (*Viscount Ferrard.*)

Thomas Henry Lord Ravensworth.

Thomas Lord Delamere.

John George Weld Lord Forester.

John James Lord Rayleigh.

Ulysses Lord Downes. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

Nicholas Lord Bexley.

Robert Francis Lord Gifford.

Percy Clinton Sydney Lord Penshurst. (*Viscount Strangford.*)

William Lord Tadcaster. (*In another place as Marquess of Thomond.*)

Ulick John Lord Somerhill. (*Marquess of Clanricarde.*)

James Lord Wigan. (*Earl of Balcarres.*)

Thomas Lord Ranfurly. (*Earl of Ranfurly.*)

George Lord De Tabley.

James Archibald Lord Wharncliffe. (*In another place as Lord President of the Council.*)

William Lord Feversham.

Charles Rose Lord Seaford.

John Singleton Lord Lyndhurst. (*In another place as Lord Chancellor.*)

James Lord Fife. (*Earl of Fife.*)

John Henry Lord Tenterden.

William Conyngham Lord Plunket.

Thomas Lord Melros. (*Earl of Haddington.*)

Henry Lord Cowley

Charles Lord Stuart de Rothesay.

William Lord Heytesbury.

Archibald John Lord Rosebery. (*Earl of Rosebery.*)

Richard Lord Clanwilliam. (*Earl of Clanwilliam.*)

Edward Lord Skelmersdale.

THOMAS Lord WALLACE.
WILLIAM DRAPER Lord WYNFORD.
HENRY Lord BROUGHAM and VAUX.
WILLIAM GEORGE Lord KILMARNOCK. *(Earl of Erroll.)*
ARTHUR JAMES Lord FINGALL. (*Earl of Fingall.*)
CHARLES WILLIAM Lord SEFTON. (*Earl of Sefton.*)
NATHANIEL Lord CLEMENTS. (*Earl of Leitrim.*)
GEORGE WILLIAM FOX Lord ROSSIE. *(Lord Kinnaird.)*
THOMAS Lord KENLIS. *(Marquess of Headfort.)*
JOHN CHAMBRE Lord CHAWORTH. (*Earl of Meath.*)
ALEXANDER EDWARD Lord DUNMORE. (*Earl of Dunmore.*)
GEORGE JAMES Lord LUDLOW. (*Earl Ludlow.)*
ROBERT MONTGOMERY Lord HAMILTON. (*Lord Belhaven and Stenton.*)
JOHN HOBART Lord HOWDEN.
WILLIAM Lord PANMURE.
GEORGE WARWICK Lord POLTIMORE.
EDWARD PRYCE Lord MOSTYN.
HENRY SPENCER Lord TEMPLEMORE.
WILLIAM LEWIS LORD DINORBEN.
VALENTINE BROWNE Lord CLONCURRY.
JAMES Lord DE SAUMAREZ.
FRANCIS GODOLPHIN Lord GODOLPHIN.
LUCIUS Lord HUNSDON. (*Visc. Falkland.*)
CHARLES CALLIS Lord WESTERN.
THOMAS Lord DENMAN.
JOHN WILLIAM Lord DUNCANNON.
WILLIAM Lord FITZGERALD.
JAMES Lord ABINGER.
PHILIP CHARLES Lord DE L'ISLE and DUDLEY.
ALEXANDER Lord ASHBURTON.
CHARLES Lord GLENELG.
EDWARD JOHN Lord HATHERTON.
JOHN Lord STRAFFORD.
ARCHIBALD Lord WORLINGHAM. *(In another place as Earl of Gosford.)*
CHARLES CHRISTOPHER Lord COTTENHAM.
HENRY Lord LANGDALE.
EDWARD BERKELEY Lord PORTMAN.
THOMAS ALEXANDER Lord LOVAT.
WILLIAM Lord BATEMAN.
FRANCIS WILLIAM Lord CHARLEMONT. *(In another place as Earl of Charlemont.)*
ANTHONY ADRIAN Lord KINTORE. *(Earl of Kintore.)*
CORNELIUS Lord LISMORE. *(Viscount Lismore.)*
WARNER WILLIAM Lord ROSSMORE.
ROBERT SHAPLAND Lord CAREW.
WILLIAM FRANCIS SPENCER Lord DE MAULEY.
JOHN Lord WROTTESLY.
CHARLES Lord SUDELEY.
PAUL Lord METHUEN.
FREDERICK JAMES Lord BEAUVALE.
RICHARD WOGAN Lord FURNIVAL. (*Lord Talbot of Malahide.*)
JOHN THOMAS Lord STANLEY of ALDERLEY.
HENRY Lord STUART DE DECIES.
CHANDOS Lord LEIGH of STONELEIGH.
PAUL BEILBY Lord WENLOCK.
CHARLES Lord LURGAN.
NICHOLAS WILLIAM Lord COLBORNE.
ARTHUR Lord DE FREYNE.
JAMES Lord DUNFERMLINE.
THOMAS Lord MONTEAGLE of BRANDON.
JOHN Lord SEATON.
JOHN Lord KEANE.
JOHN Lord CAMPBELL.
JOHN Lord OXENFOORD. (*Earl of Stair.*)
VALENTINE Lord KENMARE. (*Earl of Kenmare.*)
GEORGE HAMILTON Lord ENNISHOWEN and CARRICKFERGUS.
RICHARD HUSSEY Lord VIVIAN.
HENRY BROOKE Lord CONGLETON.

MEM.—*According to the Usage of Parliament, when the House appoints a Select Committee, the Lords appointed to serve upon it are named in the Order of their Rank, beginning with the Highest; and so, when the House sends a Committee to a Conference with the Commons, the Lord highest in Rank is called first, and the rest go forth in like Order: But when the Whole House is called over for any Purpose within the House, or for the Purpose of proceeding forth to Westminster Hall, or upon any public Solemnity, the Call begins invariably with the Junior Baron.*

LIST OF MEMBERS

Returned from the respective Counties, Cities, Towns, and Boroughs, to the *Second Session* of the *Fourteenth Parliament* of the United Kingdom of *Great Britain and Ireland*, and *Fifth of Queen Victoria*: Corrected to the 3rd Day of February, 1842.

Abingdon.
Thomas Duffield.

Andover.
Ralph Etwall,
Hon. William (Paget) Lord W. Paget.

Anglesey.
Hon. William Owen Stanley.

Arundel.
Hon. Henry Granville (Howard) Lord Fitzalan.

Ashburton.
William Jardine.

Ashton-under-Line.
Charles Hindley.

Aylesbury.
John Baillie Hamilton,
Rice Richard Clayton.

Banbury.
Henry William Tancred.

Barnstaple.
Frederick Hodgson,
Montague Gore.

Bath.
Hon. Adam (Duncan) Viscount Duncan,
John Arthur Roebuck.

Beaumaris.
Frederick Paget.

Bedford.
Frederick Polhill,
Henry Stuart.

Bedfordshire.
Hon. John Hume (Cust) Viscount Alford,
William Astell.

Berkshire.
Robert Palmer,
Philip Pusey,
Rt. hon. William Keppel viscount Barrington.

Berwick-upon-Tweed.
Richard Hodgson,
Matthew Forster.

Beverley.
John Towneley,
James Weir Hogg.

Bewdley.
Sir Thomas Edward Winnington, bt.

Birmingham.
George Frederick Muntz,
Joshua Scholefield.

Blackburn.
William Feilden,
John Hornby.

Bodmin.
Charles Crespigny Vivian,
Hon. John (Townshend) Earl of Leicester.

Bolton-le-Moors.
Peter Ainsworth,
John Bowring.

Boston.
John Studholme Brownrigg,
Sir James Duke, knt.

Bradford.
John Hardy,
William Busfeild.

Brecknockshire.
Thomas Wood.

Brecknock.
Charles Morgan Robinson Morgan.

Bridgenorth.
Thos. Charlton Whitmore,
Sir Robert Pigot, bt.

Bridgewater.
Henry Broadwood,
Thomas Seaton Forman.

Bridport.
Henry Warburton,
Thomas Alexander Mitchell.

Brighton.
George Richard Pechell,
Isaac Newton Wigney.

Bristol.
Philip William Skynner Miles,
Hon. Francis Henry Fitzhardinge Berkeley.

Buckingham.
Sir Thomas Francis Fremantle, bt.,
Sir John Chetwode, bt.

Buckinghamshire.
Sir William Laurence Young, bt.,
Caledon George Du Pré,
Charles Robert Scott Murray.

Bury.
Richard Walker.

Bury St. Edmund's.
Hon. Frederick William (Hervey) Earl Jermyn,
Rt. Hon. Charles (Fitzroy) Lord C. Fitzroy.

Calne.
Hon. Henry (Petty Fitzmaurice) Earl of Shelburne.

Cambridge.
Hon. John Henry Thomas Manners Sutton,
Sir Alexander Cray Grant.

Cambridgeshire.
Hon. Eliot Thomas Yorke,
Richard Jefferson Eaton,
John Peter Allix.

CAMBRIDGE (UNIVERSITY)
Rt. hon. Henry Goulburn,
Hon. Charles Ewan Law.

CANTERBURY.
Hon. George Percy Sydney Smythe,
James Bradshaw.

CARDIFF.
John Iltid Nicholl.

CARDIGAN.
Pryse Pryse,*
John Sandrett Harford.*

CARDIGANSHIRE.
William Edward Powell.

CARLISLE.
Philip Henry Howard,
William Marshall.

CARMARTHEN.
David Morris.

CARMARTHENSHIRE.
Hon. George Rice Rice Trevor,
John Jones.

CARNARVON.
William Bulkeley Hughes.

CARNARVONSHIRE.
Hon. Edward Gordon Douglas Pennant.

CHATHAM.
Rt. hon. George Stevens Byng.

CHELTENHAM.
Hon. Craven Fitzhardinge Berkeley.

CHESHIRE.
(Northern Division.)
William Tatton Egerton,
George Cornwall Legh.
(Southern Division.)
Sir Philip de Malpas Grey Egerton, bt.,
John Tollemache.

CHESTER.
Rt. hon. Robert (Grosvenor) Lord R. Grosvenor,
John Jervis.

CHICHESTER.
Hon. Arthur (Lennox) Lord A. Lennox,
John Abel Smith.

CHIPPENHAM.
Joseph Neeld,
Henry George Boldero.

CHRISTCHURCH.
Rt. hon. Sir George Henry Rose G.C.H.

CIRENCESTER.
Thomas William Chester Master,
William Cripps.

CLITHEROE.
Matthew Wilson.

COCKERMOUTH.
Henry Aglionby Aglionby,
Edward Horsman.

COLCHESTER.
Richard Sanderson,
Sir George Henry Smyth, bt.

CORNWALL.
(Eastern Division.)
Hon. Edward Granville (Eliot) Lord Eliot,
William Rashleigh.
(Western Division.)
Edward William Wynne Pendarves,

COVENTRY.
Rt. hon. Edward Ellice,
William Williams.

CRICKLADE.
John Neeld,
Hon. Henry Howard.

CUMBERLAND.
(Eastern Division).
Hon. Charles Wentworth George Howard,
William James.
(Western Division.)
Samuel Irton,
Edward Stanley.

DARTMOUTH.
Sir John Henry Seale bt.

DENBIGH.
Townshend Mainwaring.

DENBIGHSHIRE.
Hon. William Bagot,
Sir Watkin Williams Wynn.

DERBY.
Edward Strutt,
Hon. John George Brabazon Ponsonby.

DERBYSHIRE.
(Northern Division.)
Hon. Geo. Henry Cavendish,
William Evans.
(Southern Division.)
Edward Miller Mundy,
Charles Robert Colvile.

DEVIZES.
Thomas Henry Sutton Sotheran,
George Heneage Walker Heneage.

DEVONPORT.
Henry Tufnell,
Rt. hon. Sir George Grey, bt.

DEVONSHIRE.
(Northern Division.)
Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, bt.,
Lewis William Buck.
(Southern Division.)
Sir John Buller Yarde Buller, bt.,
Hon. William Reginald (Courtenay) Visc. Courtenay.

DORCHESTER.
Hon. Anthony Henry Ashley-Cooper,
Rt. hon. Sir James Robert George Graham, bt.

DORSETSHIRE.
Hon. Anthony (Ashley Cooper) Lord Ashley,
Henry Charles Sturt,
George Bankes.

DOVOR.
Sir John Rae Reid, bt.,
Hon. Edward Royd Rice.

DROITWICH.
John Somerset Pakington.

DUDLEY.
Thomas Hawkes.

DURHAM.
(Northern Division.)
Hedworth Lambton,
Hon. Henry Thomas Liddell.
(Southern Division.)
Hon. Harry (Vane) Lord H. Vane,
John Bowes.

DURHAM (CITY.)
Thomas Colpitts Granger,
Robert Fitzroy.

ESSEX.
(Northern Division.)
Sir John Tyssen Tyrrell, bt.,
Charles Gray Round.
(Southern Division.)
Thomas William Bramston,
George Palmer.

EVESHAM.
Hon. Arthur Marcus Cecil (Hill) Lord M. C. Hill,
Peter Borthwick.

EXETER.
Sir William Webb Follett, knt.,
Edward Divett.

EYE.
Sir Edward Kerrison, bt.

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* Double Return.

FINSBURY.
Thos. Slingsby Duncombe,
Thomas Wakley.

FLINT.
Sir Richard Bulkeley Williams Bulkeley, bt.

FLINTSHIRE.
Hon. Edward Mostyn Lloyd Mostyn.

FROME.
Thomas Sheppard.

GATESHEAD.
William Hutt.

GLAMORGANSHIRE.
Hon. Edward Richard Wyndham (Wyndham Quin) viscount Adare,
Christopher Rice Mansel Talbot.

GLOUCESTER.
John Phillpots,
Hon. Maurice Frederick Fitzhardinge Berkeley.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.
(Eastern Division.)
Christopher William Codrington,
Hon. Francis Charteris.

(Western Division.)
Hon. George Charles Grantley Fitzhardinge Berkeley,
Robert Blagden Hale.

GRANTHAM.
Glynne Earle Welby,
Hon. Frederick James Tollemache.

GREENWICH.
James Whitley Deans Dundas,
Edward George Barnard.

GRIMSBY (GREAT).
Edward Heneage.

GUILDFORD.
Ross Donnelly Mangles,
Charles Baring Wall.

HALIFAX.
Edward Protheroe,
Charles Wood.

HAMPSHIRE.
(Northern Division.)
Rt. hon. Charles Shaw Lefevre,
Sir William Heathcote, bt.

(Southern Division.)
John Willis Fleming,
Henry Combe Compton.

HARWICH.
John Attwood,
William Beresford.

HASTINGS.
Rt. hon. Joseph Planta,
Robert Hollond.

HAVERFORDWEST.
Sir Richard Bulkeley Philipps Philipps, bt.

HELSTON.
Sir Richard Rawlinson Vyvyan, bt.

HEREFORD.
Edward Bolton Clive,
Henry William Hobhouse.

HEREFORDSHIRE.
Kedgwin Hoskins,
Thomas Baskerville Mynors Baskerville,
Joseph Bailey.

HERTFORD.
Hon. Philip Henry (Stanhope) viscount Mahon,
Hon. William Francis Cowper.

HERTFORDSHIRE.
Hon. James Walter (Grimston) viscount Grimston,
Abel Smith,
Hon. Granville Dudley Ryder.

HONITON.
Hugh Duncan Baillie,
Forster Alleyne Mac Geachy.

HORSHAM.
Hon. Robert Campbell Scarlett.

HUDDERSFIELD.
William Rookes Crompton Stansfield.

HUNTINGDON.
Sir Frederick Pollock, knt.,
Jonathan Peel.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE.
Edward Fellowes,
George Thornhill.

HYTHE.
Stewart Majoribanks.

IPSWICH.
Rigby Wason,
George Rennie.

KENDAL.
George William Wood.

KENT.
(Eastern Division.)
Rt. hon. Sir Edward Knatchbull, bt.,
John Pemberton Plumptre.

(Western Division.)
Sir Edmund Filmer, bt.,
Hon. Charles (Marsham) viscount Marsham.

KIDDERMINSTER.
Richard Godson.

KING'S LYNN.
Hon. William George Frederick Cavendish (Bentinck) Lord G. F. C. Bentinck,

KINGSTON-UPON-HULL.
Sir John Hanmer, bt.,
Sir Walter Charles James, bt.

KNARESBOROUGH.
Andrew Lawson,
William Busfeild Ferrand.

LAMBETH.
Benjamin Hawes,
Rt. Hon. Charles Tennyson D'Eyncourt.

LANCASHIRE.
(Southern Division.)
Rt. hon. Francis (Egerton) Lord F. Egerton,
Hon. Richard Bootle Wilbraham.

(Northern Division.)
John Wilson Patten,
Rt. hon. Edward Geoffrey (Smith Stanley) Lord Stanley.

LANCASTER.
Thomas Greene,
George Marton.

LAUNCESTON.
Rt. hon. Sir Henry Hardinge, K.C.B.

LEEDS.
William Beckett,
William Aldam.

LEICESTER.
Sir John Easthope, bt.,
Wynn Ellis.

LEICESTERSHIRE
(Northern Division.)
Hon. Charles Henry Somerset (Manners) Lord C. H. S. Manners,
Edward Basil Farnham.

(Southern Division.)
Henry Halford,
Charles William Packe.

LEOMINSTER.
Charles Greenaway,

LEWES.

Summers Harford,
Howard Elphinstone.

LICHFIELD.

Sir George Anson, G.C.B.,
Hon. Alfred Henry (Paget) Lord A. H. Paget.

LINCOLN.

Charles De Laet Waldo Sibthorp,
William Rickford Collett.

LINCOLNSHIRE.

(Parts of Kesteven and Holland.)

Christopher Turnour,
Sir John Trollope, bt.

(Parts of Lindsey.)

Hon. Charles Anderson Worsley (Pelham) Lord Worsley,
Robert Adam Christopher.

LISKEARD.

Charles Buller.

LIVERPOOL.

Hon. Dudley (Ryder) Viscount Sandon,

LONDON.

John Masterman,
Sir Matthew Wood, bt.,
George Lyall,
Rt. hon. John (Russell) Lord J. Russell.

LUDLOW.

Beriah Botfield,
James Ackers.

LYME REGIS.

William Pinney.

LYMINGTON.

John Stewart,
William Alex. Mackinnon.

MACCLESFIELD.

John Brocklehurst,
Thomas Grimsditch.

MAIDSTONE.

Alexander James Beresford Hope,
George Dodd.

MALDON.

Quintin Dick,
John Round.

MALMESBURY.

Hon. Jas. Kenneth Howard.

MALTON.

John Walbanke Childers,
John Evelyn Denison.

MANCHESTER.

Mark Philips,
Thomas Milner Gibson.

MARLBOROUGH.

Hon. Ernest Augustus Charles (Brudenell Bruce) Lord E. A. C. B. Bruce,
Henry Bingham Baring.

MARLOW (GREAT).

Thomas Peers Williams,
Sir William Robert Clayton, bt.

MARYLEBONE.

Sir Benjamin Hall, bt.,
Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B.

MERIONETHSHIRE.

Richard Richards.

MERTHYR TYDVIL.

Sir Josiah John Guest, bt.

MIDDLESEX.

George Byng,
Thomas Wood.

MIDHURST.

Sir Horace Beauchamp Seymour, knt.

MONMOUTH.

Reginald James Blewitt.

MONMOUTHSHIRE.

Rt. hon. Granville Charles Henry (Somerset) Lord G. C. H. Somerset,
Charles Octavius Swinnerton Morgan.

MONTGOMERY.

Hon. Hugh Cholmondeley.

MONTGOMERYSHIRE.

Rt. hon. Charles Watkin Williams Wynn.

MORPETH.

Hon. Edward George Granville Howard.

NEWARK-UPON-TRENT.

William Ewart Gladstone,
Hon. John (Manners) Lord J. Manners.

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME.

Edmund Buckley,
John Quincey Harris.

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.

William Ord,
John Hodgson Hinde.

NEWPORT.

Charles Wykeham Martin,
William John Hamilton.

NORFOLK.

(Eastern Division.)

Edmund Wodehouse,
Henry Negus Burroughes.

(Western Division.)

William Bagge,
Wm. Lyde Wiggett Chute

NORTHALLERTON.

William Battye Wrightson.

NORTHAMPTON.

Rt. Hon. Robert Vernon Smith,
Raikes Currie.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

(Northern Division.)

Thomas Philip Maunsell,
Augustus Stafford O'Brien.

(Southern Division.)

William Ralph Cartwright,
Sir Charles Knightley, bt.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

(Northern Division.)

Hon. Charles (Bennett) Lord Ossulston,
Addison John Baker Cresswell.

(Southern Division.)

Matthew Bell,
Savile Craven Henry Ogle.

NORWICH.

Hon. Arthur Richard (Wellesley) Marquess of Douro,
Benjamin Smith.

NOTTINGHAM.

Rt. hon. Sir John Cam Hobhouse, bt.,
Sir George Gerard de Hochpied Larpent, bt.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

(Northern Division.)

Thomas Houldsworth,
Henry Gally Knight.

(Southern Division.)

Hon. Henry Pelham (Fiennes Pelham Clinton) Earl of Lincoln,
Lancelot Rolleston.

OLDHAM.

John Fielden,
William Augustus Johnson.

OXFORD (CITY.)

James Haughton Langston,
Donald Maclean.

OXFORDSHIRE.

Hon. Montague (Bertie) Lord Norreys,
George Granville Harcourt,
Joseph Warner Henley.

OXFORD (UNIVERSITY.)

Thomas Grimston Bucknall Estcourt,
Sir Robert Harry Inglis, bt.

PEMBROKE.
Sir John Owen, bt.

PEMBROKESHIRE.
Hon. John Frederick Vaughan (Campbell) viscount Emlyn.

PENRYN.
John Cranch Walker Vivian,
James Hanway Plumridge.

PETERBOROUGH.
Hon. George Wentworth Fitzwilliam,
Sir Robert Heron, bt.

PETERSFIELD.
Sir William George Hylton Jolliffe, bt.

PLYMOUTH.
Thomas Gill,
Hon. Hugh (Fortescue) viscount Ebrington.

PONTEFRACT.
Hon. John Charles George (Saville) visc. Pollington,
Richard Monckton Milnes.

POOLE.
Hon. Charles Frederick Ashley Cooper Ponsonby,
George Richard Philips.

PORTSMOUTH.
Rt. Hon. Francis Thornhill Baring,
Sir George Thomas Staunton, bt.

PRESTON.
Sir Peter Hesketh Fleetwood, bt.,
Sir George Strickland, bt.

RADNOR (NEW).
Richard Price.

RADNORSHIRE.
Sir John Benn Walsh, bt.

READING.
Charles Russell,
Hon. Henry Charles (Cadogan) viscount Chelsea.

REIGATE.
Hon. Charles Somers (Somers-Cocks) viscount Eastnor.

RETFORD (EAST).
Hon. Arthur Duncombe,
Granville Harcourt Vernon.

RICHMOND.
Hon. John Charles Dundas,
Hon. William Nicholas Ridley Colborne.

RIPON.
Thomas Pemberton,
Rt. hon. Sir Edward Burtenshaw Sugden, knt.

ROCHDALE.
William Sharman Crawford.

ROCHESTER.
James Douglas Stoddart Douglas,
William Henry Bodkin.

RUTLANDSHIRE.
Gilbert John Heathcote,
Hon. William Henry Dawney.

RYE.
Herbert Barrett Curteis.

ST. ALBAN'S.
George William John Repton,
Rt. Hon. William Earl of Listowel.

ST. IVES.
William Tyringham Praed.

SALFORD.
Joseph Brotherton.

SALISBURY.
Wadham Wyndham,
William Bird Brodie.

SALOP, or SHROPSHIRE.
(*Northern Division.*)
Sir Rowland Hill, bt.,
William Ormsby Gore.
(*Southern Division.*)
Hon. Henry (Vane) Earl of Darlington,
Hon. Robert Henry Clive.

SANDWICH.
Sir Edward Thomas Troubridge, bt.,
Hugh Hamilton Lindsay.

SCARBOROUGH.
Sir John Vanden Bempde Johnstone, bt.,
Sir Frederick William Trench, knt.

SHAFTESBURY.
Hon. Henry (Howard) Lord Howard.

SHEFFIELD.
John Parker,
Henry George Ward.

SHIELDS (SOUTH).
John Twizell Wawn.

SHOREHAM (NEW).
Sir Chas. Merrik Burrell, bt.,
Charles Goring.

SHREWSBURY.
George Tomline,
Benjamin D'Israeli.

SOMERSETSHIRE.
(*Eastern Division.*)
William Gore Langton,
William Miles.
(*Western Division.*)
Thomas Dyke Acland,
Francis Henry Dickinson.

SOUTHAMPTON.
Hon. James (Bruce) Lord Bruce,
Charles Cecil Martyn.

SOUTHWARK.
John Humphery,
Benjamin Wood.

STAFFORD.
Hon. Swinfen Thomas Carnegie,
Edward Buller.

STAFFORDSHIRE.
(*Northern Division.*)
Jesse David Watts Russell,
Charles Bowyer Adderley.
(*Southern Division.*)
Hn. Henry John (Chetwynd Talbot) visc. Ingestrie,
Hon. George Anson.

STAMFORD.
Hon. Charles Cecil John (Manners) Marquess of Granby,
Sir George Clerk, bt.

STOCKPORT.
Henry Marsland,
Richard Cobden.

STOKE-UPON-TRENT.
John Lewis Ricardo,
William Taylor Copeland.

STROUD.
William Henry Stanton,
George Poulett Scrope.

SUDBURY.
Frederick Villiers,
David Ochterlony Dyce Sombre.

SUFFOLK.
(*Eastern Division.*)
Rt. hon. John Henniker Lord Henniker,
Sir Charles Broke Vere, K.C.B.
(*Western Division.*)
Robert Rushbroke,
Harry Spencer Waddington.

SUNDERLAND.
David Barclay,
Rt. hon. Henry (Grey) Viscount Howick.

SURREY.
(*Eastern Division.*)
Henry Kemble,
Edmund Antrobus.
(*Western Division.*)
William Joseph Denison,
John Trotter.

SUSSEX.
(*Eastern Division.*)
George Darby,
Augustus Elliott Fuller.
(*Western Division.*)
Hon. Charles Henry (Gordon Lennox) Earl of March,
Charles Wyndham.

SWANSEA.
John Henry Vivian.

TAMWORTH.
Rt. hon. Sir Robert Peel, bt.,
Edward Henry A'Court.

TAUNTON.
Rt. hon. Henry Labouchere,

TAVISTOCK.
John Rundle,
Hon. Edward (Russell) Lord E. Russell.

TEWKESBURY.
William Dowdeswell,
John Martin.

THETFORD.
Hon. William Bingham Baring,
Hon. Henry (Fitzroy) Earl of Euston,*
Sir James Flower, bt.*

THIRSK.
John Bell.

TIVERTON.
John Heathcoat,
Rt. hon. Henry John Viscount Palmerston.

TOTNESS.
Hon. Edward Adolphus (Seymour) Lord Seymour,
Charles Barry Baldwin.

TOWER HAMLETS.
Sir William Clay, bt.,
Charles Richard Fox.

TRURO.
John Ennis Vivian,
Edmund Turner.

TYNEMOUTH.
Henry Mitcalfe.

WAKEFIELD.
John Holdsworth.

WALLINGFORD.
William Seymour Blackstone.

WALSALL.
Robert Scott.

WAREHAM.
John Samuel Wanley Sawbridge Erle Drax.

WARRINGTON.
John Ireland Blackburn.

WARWICK.
Sir Chas. Eurwicke Douglas, knt.,
William Collins.

WARWICKSHIRE.
(*Northern Division.*)
William Stratford Dugdale,
Sir John Eardley Eardley Wilmot, bt.
(*Southern Division.*)
Sir John Mordaunt, bt.,
Evelyn John Shirley.

WELLS.
William Goodenough Hayter,
Richard Blakemore.

WENLOCK.
Hon. George Cecil Weld Forester,
James Milnes Gaskell.

WESTBURY.
Sir Ralph Lopes, bt.

WESTMINSTER.
John Temple Leader,
Hon. Henry John Rous.

WESTMORELAND.
William Thompson,
Hon. Henry Cecil Lowther.

WEYMOUTH and MELCOMBE REGIS.
Hon. George Augustus Frederick (Villiers) Viscount Villiers,
George William Hope.

WHITBY.
Aaron Chapman.

WHITEHAVEN.
Matthias Attwood.

WIGAN.
Peter Greenall,
Thomas Bright Crosse.

WIGHT, (ISLE OF).
Hon. William Henry Ashe A'Court Holmes.

WILTON.
Hon. James Howard (Harris) Viscount Fitzharris.

WILTSHIRE.
(*Northern Division.*)
Sir Francis Burdett, bt.,
Walter Long.
(*Southern Division.*)
John Benett,
Hon. Sidney Herbert.

WINCHESTER.
James Buller East,
Bickham Escot.

WINDSOR.
John Ramsbottom,
Ralph Neville.

WOODSTOCK.
Frederic Thesiger.

WOLVERHAMPTON.
Hon. Charles Pelham Villiers,
Thomas Thornely.

WORCESTER.
Sir Thomas Wilde, knt.,
Joseph Bailey.

WORCESTERSHIRE.
(*Eastern Division.*)
John Barneby,
James Arthur Taylor.
(*Western Division.*)
Hon. Henry Beauchamp Lygon,
Frederick Winn Knight

WYCOMBE (CHIPPING).
George Henry Dashwood,
Ralph Bernal.

YARMOUTH (GREAT).
Charles Edward Rumbold,
William Wilshere.

YORK.
John Henry Lowther,
Henry Redhead Yorke.

YORKSHIRE.
(*East Riding.*)
Henry Broadley,
Right hon. Beaumont Lord Hotham.
(*West Riding.*)
Hon. John Stuart Wortley,
Edward Denison.
(*North Riding.*)
Hon. Octavius Duncombe,
Edward Stillingfleet Cayley.

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* Double Return.

SCOTLAND.

Aberdeen.
Alexander Bannerman.

Aberdeenshire.
Hon. Wm. Gordon.

Argyleshire.
Alexander Campbell.

Ayr, &c.
Hon. Patrick James Herbert (Crichton Stuart) Lord P. J. H. C. Stuart.

Ayrshire.
Hon. James (Boyle Carr) Viscount Kelburne.

Banffshire.
James Duff.

Berwickshire.
Sir Hugh Purvis Hume Campbell, bt.

Buteshire.
Rt. hon. Sir Will. Rae, bt.

Caithness-shire.
George Trail.

Clackmannan and Kinros-shires.

Cupar, &c.
Edward Ellice.

Dumbartonshire.
Alexander Smollett.

Dumfries, &c.
William Ewart.

Dumfriesshire.
John James Hope Johnstone.

Dundee.
George Duncan.

Dysart &c.
Robert Ferguson.

Edinburgh.
Rt. hon. Thomas Babington Macaulay,
William Gibson Craig.

Edinburghshire.
William Ramsay Ramsay.

Elgin, &c.
Sir Andrew Leith Hay, knt.

Elginshire and Nairne.
Charles Lennox Cumming Bruce.

Fifeshire.
James Erskine Wemyss.

Forfarshire.
Hon. John Frederick (Gordon) Lord J. F. Gordon.

Fortrose, &c.
James Morrison.

Glasgow.
James Oswald,
John Dennistoun.

Greenock.
Robert Wallace.

Haddington, &c.
James Maitland Balfour.

Haddingtonshire.
Sir Thomas Buchan Hepburn, bt.

Inverbervie, &c.
Patrick Chalmers.

Inverkeithing, &c.
Hon. Archibald (Primrose) Lord Dalmeny.

Invernesssshire.
Henry James Baillie.

Kincardineshire.
Hon. Hugh Arbuthnott.

Kirkcudbright.
Alexander Murray.

Kirkwall, &c.
James Loch.

Lanarkshire.
William Lockhart.

Leith, &c.
Rt. hon. Andrew Rutherfurd.

Linlithgow, &c.
William Baird.

Linlithgowshire.
Hon. Charles Hope.

Orkney and Shetland Shires.
Frederick Dundas.

Paisley.
Archibald Hastie.

Peebleshire.
William Forbes Mackenzie.

Perth.
Rt. hon. Fox Maule.

Perthshire.
Henry Home Drummond.

Renfrew, &c.
Alexander Johnston.

Renfrewshire.
Patrick Maxwell Stewart.

Ross and Cromarty-shires.
Thomas Mackenzie.

Roxburghshire.
Hon. Francis Scott.

Selkirkshire.
Alexander Pringle.

Stirlingshire.
William Forbes.

Sutherlandshire.
David Dundas.

Wigton, &c.
Sir John M'Taggart, bt.

Wigtonshire.
John Dalrymple.

IRELAND.

Antrim.
John Irving,
Nathaniel Alexander.

Armagh.
Hon. Archibald (Acheson) Viscount Acheson,
William Verner.

Armagh (City.)
John Dawson Rawdon.

Athlone.
George de la Poer Beresford.

Bandon-Bridge.

Belfast.
James Emerson Tennent,
William Gillilan Johnson.

Carlow.
Henry Bruen,
Thomas Banbury.

Carlow (Borough.)
Brownlow Villiers Layard.

Carrickfergus.
Peter Kirk.

Cashell.
Joseph Stock.

Cavan.
John Young,
Henry John Clements.

Clare.
William Nugent M'Namara,
Cornelius O'Brien.

Clonmel.
Rt. hon. David Richard Pigot.

Coleraine.
Edward Litton.

Cork.
Daniell O'Connell,*
Edmund Burke Roche.

Cork (City.)
Francis Slack Murphy,
Daniel Callaghan.

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* Returned also for Meath.

Donegal.

Sir Edmund Samuel Hayes, bt.,
Edward Michael Connolly.

Down.

Rt. hon. Frederick William Robert (Stewart) Viscount Castlereagh,
Hon. Arthur Wills Blundell Sandys Trumbull Windsor (Hill) Earl of Hillsborough.

Downpatrick.

David Stewart Kerr.

Drogheda.

Sir William Meridyth Somerville, bt.

Dublin.

James Hans Hamilton,
Thomas Edward Taylor.

Dublin (City.)

Edward Grogan,

Dublin (University.)

Rt. hon. Frederick Shaw,

Dundalk.

Thos. Nicholas Redington.

Dungannon.

Hon. Thomas (Knox) Viscount Northland.

Dungarvan.

Rt. hon. Richard Lalor Sheil.

Ennis.

Hewitt Bridgeman.

Enniskillen.

Hon. Arthur Henry Cole.

Fermanagh.

Sir Arthur Brinsley Brooke, bt.,
Mervyn Archdall.

Galway.

John James Bodkin,
Thomas Barnewell Martin.

Galway (Borough).

Martin Joseph Blake,
Sir Valentine Blake, bt.

Kerry.

Hon. William Browne,
Morgan John O'Connell,

Kildare.

Richard More O'Ferrall,
Robert Archbold.

Kilkenny.

Hon. Pierse Butler,
George Bryan.

Kilkenny (Borough).

John O'Connell.

King's (County).

Hon. John Craven Westenra,
Sir Andrew Armstrong, bt.

Kinsale.

William Henry Watson.

Leitrim.

Hon. William Sydney (Clements) Viscount Clements.
Samuel White.

Limerick.

William Smith O'Brien,
Caleb Powell.

Limerick (City).

Sir David Roche, bt.,
John O'Brien.

Lisburn.

Henry Meynell.

Londonderry.

Sir Robert Bateson, bt.,
Theobald Jones.

Londonderry (City.)

Sir Robert Alexander Ferguson, bt.

Longford.

Luke White,
Henry White.

Louth.

Rich. Montesquieu Bellew,
Hon. Thomas Vesey Dawson.

Mallow.

Sir Chas. Denham Orlando Jephson Norreys, bt.

Mayo.

Robert Dillon Browne,
Mark Blake.

Meath.

Daniell O'Connell,*
Henry Grattan.

Monaghan.

Hon. Henry Robt. Westenra,
Evelyn Philip Shirley.

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* Returned also for Cork.

Newry.

Hon. Francis Jack (Needham) Viscount Newry and Morne.

Portarlington.

Hon. George Lionel Dawson Damer.

Queen's (County).

Sir Chas. Henry Coote, bt.,
Hon. Thomas Vesey.

Ross, (New).

Hon. Robert Gore.

Roscommon.

Fitzstephen French,
Denis O'Conor, (The O'Conor Don).

Sligo.

Alexander Perceval,
William Richard Ormsby Gore.

Sligo (Borough.)

John Patrick Somers.

Tipperary.

Valentine Maher,
Hon. Robert Otway Cave.

Tralee.

Maurice O'Connell.

Tyrone.

Right hon. Henry Thomas Lowry Corry,
Hon. Claud (Hamilton) Lord C. Hamilton.

Waterford.

William Villiers Stuart,
Hon. Robt. Shapland Carew.

Waterford (City.)

William Christmas,
William Morris Reade.

Westmeath.

Hugh Morgan Tuite,
Benjamin James Chapman.

Wexford.

Villiers Francis Hatton,
James Power.

Wexford (Borough.)

Sir Thomas Esmonde, bt.

Wicklow.

William Acton,
Sir Ralph Howard, bt.

Youghall.

Hon. Compton Cavendish.

HANSARD'S

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

IN THE *SECOND SESSION* OF THE *FOURTEENTH PARLIAMENT* OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN* AND *IRELAND*, APPOINTED TO MEET 11 NOVEMBER, 1841, AND FROM THENCE CONTINUED TILL 3 FEBRUARY, IN THE FIFTH YEAR OF

HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

FIRST VOLUME OF THE SESSION.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, February 3, 1842.

MINUTES.] Certificate. Earl of Home elected a Representative Peer of Scotland, *v.* Earl of Elgin, dec.

The Earls of Westmorland, and Falmouth, and Earl Fortescue, first sat in Parliament after the death of their respective Fathers.

Bill. 1^a. Select Vestries.

MEETING OF PARLIAMENT.] Her Majesty went to day in the usual State, and opened the Parliament in Person. His Majesty the King of Prussia preceded her Majesty by a few minutes, and was present in the House of Lords at the ceremony. The Commons having come to the Bar of the House of Peers, her Majesty read the following Royal Speech:—

My Lords, and Gentlemen,

I CANNOT meet you in Parliament assembled, without making a public Acknowledgment of My Gratitude to Almighty God on account of the Birth of The Prince, My Son; an Event which has completed the Measure of My domestic Happiness, and has been hailed with every Demonstration of affectionate Attachment to My Person and Government by My faithful and loyal People.

I AM confident that you will participate in the Satisfaction which I have derived from the Presence in this Country, of My good Brother and Ally, the King of *Prussia*, who, at My Request, undertook in Person the Office of Sponsor at the Christening of The Prince of *Wales*.

I RECEIVE from all Princes and States the continued Assurance of their earnest Desire to maintain the most friendly Relations with this Country.

IT is with great Satisfaction that I inform you, that I have concluded with the Emperor of *Austria*, the King of the *French*, the King of *Prussia*, and the Emperor of *Russia*, a Treaty for the more effectual Suppression of the Slave Trade, which, when the Ratifications shall have been exchanged, will be communicated to Parliament.

There shall also be laid before you a Treaty which I have concluded with the same Powers, together with the Sultan, having for its Object the Security of the *Turkish* Empire, and the Maintenance of the general Tranquillity.

The Restoration of My diplomatic and friendly Intercourse with the Court of *Tehran* has been followed by the Completion of a Commercial Treaty with the King of *Persia*, which I have directed to be laid before you.

I am engaged in Negotiations with several Powers, which, I trust, by leading to Conventions founded on the just principle of mutual Advantage, may extend the Trade and Commerce of the Country.

I regret that I am not enabled to announce to you the Re-establishment of peaceful Relations with the Government of *China*.

The uniform Success which has attended the hostile Operations directed against that Power, and my confidence in the Skill and Gallantry of My Naval and Military Forces, encourage the Hope on My Part, that our Differences with the Government of *China* will be brought to an early Termination, and our Commercial Relations with that Country placed on a satisfactory Basis.

Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

The Estimates for the Year have been prepared, and will be laid before you.

I rely with entire Confidence on your Disposition, while you enforce the Principles of a wise Economy, to make that Provision for the Service of the Country which the Public Exigencies require.

My Lords, and Gentlemen,

I recommend to your immediate Attention the State of the Finances and of the Expenditure of the Country.

You will have seen with Regret, that for several Years past, the annual Income has been inadequate to bear the Public Charges; and I feel confident, that fully sensible of the Evil which must result from a continued Deficiency of this Nature during Peace, you will carefully consider the best Means of averting it.

I recommend also to your Consideration the State of the Laws which affect the Import of Corn, and of other Articles, the Produce of Foreign Countries.

Measures will be submitted for your Consideration for the Amendment of the Law of Bankruptcy, and for the Improvement of the Jurisdiction exercised by the Ecclesiastical Courts in *England* and *Wales*.

It will also be desirable that you should consider, with a view to their Revision, the Laws which regulate the Registration of Electors of Members to serve in Parliament.

I have observed with deep Regret the continued Distress in the Manufacturing Districts of the Country.

The Sufferings and Privations which have resulted from it have been borne with exemplary Patience and Fortitude.

I feel assured that your Deliberations on the various important Matters which will occupy your Attention will be directed by a comprehensive Regard for the Interests and permanent Welfare of all Classes of My Subjects, and I fervently pray that they may tend in their Result to improve the National Resources, and to encourage the Industry and promote the Happiness of My People."

Address in Answer to the Speech.] The Marquess of *Abercorn* rose for the purpose of moving, that a humble Address be presented to her Majesty, in answer to her most gracious Speech; and in doing so, he said he had to claim from their Lordships more than an ordinary share of their indulgence; for, in addition to the embarrassment which he felt in addressing their Lordships for the first time, he was fully sensible of his inability to deal with the important topics which were touched upon in the Speech from the Throne, and of the responsibility which attached to him in venturing to address their Lordships upon them. He was anxious also that nothing which fell from him should, in the slightest degree, tend to disturb the unanimity which he trusted would be evinced on this occasion. The first paragraph of the Speech was one of peculiar interest, and in his view was paramount to all others. It was one to which he was sure not only their Lordships, but the whole of the people of this country, would fully and cordially bear assent. The announcement of the birth of an heir to the Throne of England, associated as it was with the history of the past, and connected as it also was with the future welfare of the country, was an event at all times, and even under circumstances of an ordinary character, calculated to form the subject of great congratulation, and of a lively demonstration of loyalty and respect. If at such an event, apart from other considerations, these feelings were drawn forth, how great must be the national joy, how unbounded the loyalty of the people on the present most auspicious occasion at an event which came before them under such peculiar circumstances of interest. He was sure their Lordships would most gratefully participate with her Majesty in the prayers which she had offered up to the Almighty for his goodness. He was sure also, that their Lordships would join with her Majesty in the satisfaction she had expressed at the presence in this country of her august ally the king of Prussia, and at the office which that illustrious person had taken upon himself, in becoming sponsor to her Majesty's son, the Prince of Wales. Their Lordships would, no doubt, see great cause of satisfaction at the selection which had been made by her Majesty. Nothing had been wanting on the part of the people of this country to express, by the most public marks of esteem, how fully they appreciated his Majesty's presence on this interesting occasion; and his Majesty must have been gratified at witnessing the universal respect which his enlightened exertions for the prosperity of his own dominions had demanded and drawn forth. It must also have been matter of considerable pleasure to that illustrious person, not only to have received the tribute of respect towards himself, but to have witnessed how deeply the affections of the people of England were centered in the happiness of their queen. There never had been any period at the birth of an heir to the Throne of these realms in which the promise for the future was so clear and unclouded as the present, or which more powerfully called forth a people's gratitude to Divine Providence. It would not be becoming in him to dilate more upon this subject, but if a bright example in the parents of the future sovereign of this empire, if talent, guided by benevolence and devoted to the welfare of the country and the happiness of a people, were fit models for a prince, and for insuring his future excellence, then surely he might boldly say that at this time, more than at any former period in the history of this country, were there those illustrious examples from which such excellence might be derived. Their Lordships must be gratified to hear that her Majesty had received from all princes and states the continued assurance of their earnest desire to maintain the most friendly relations with this country, and that, in furtherance of that desirable object, a treaty had been entered into by her Majesty in conjunction with the Emperor of Austria, the King of the French, the King of Prussia, and the Emperor of Russia, together with the Sultan, which could not fail to insure the tranquillity of Europe, and maintain the stability of the Turkish empire. Looking at the unsettled state of affairs in the East, and considering the disastrous results that must arise from a dismemberment of the Ottoman empire, they had reason to congratulate themselves on the conclusion of a treaty which, it must be admitted, insured a permanent settlement of the Eastern question. Other beneficial results were expected to arise from that treaty in the extension of our trade and the development of our commercial resources. The announcement of the success of another treaty which her Majesty had concluded with the powers of Europe, for the more effectual suppression of the Slave-trade, would be received with much satisfaction, seeking to accomplish, as it did, an object so desirable. After the sacrifices which this country had made, and after the efforts which had been so successfully followed up for the suppression of that detestable trade, it was most gratifying to find that this treaty would complete all that diplomacy could accomplish for that desirable object. It would deal a final blow, and extinguish for ever that stain upon our common humanity. In re-establishing friendly relations with the court of Persia, and concluding a commercial treaty with that power, their Lordships might justly expect an extension of our commerce, and an important increase of the influence of this country in that part of the globe. On the subject of China, it was a matter of regret that it had not been in the power of her Majesty to renew a friendly intercourse with that empire; but as this was a subject which had already been discussed in Parliament, he would not detain their Lordships further than to remark that the justice of our claims upon that country having been universally recognized, and the success of our arms having proved that no effort on the part of China could for any long period resist those claims, there was every reason to expect, not only a satisfactory settlement of our dispute with that country, but that such an indication of our power would have been given, as would ultimately place our commerce with China on the most advantageous foundation. He had thus briefly gone through the topics of the Speech which related to our foreign affairs. He would now call their Lordships attention to that paragraph in which the state of the revenue was recommended to their consideration. For some time past the revenue of the country had been exceeded by the expenditure to an extent which rendered it necessary that some new measures should be taken to remedy so great an evil. It had been thought practicable by a former Government, to provide for this deficiency by continued reduction, and retrenchment had accordingly been carried out to the utmost limit which was consistent with the proper maintenance of the State. Notwithstanding those reductions, the expenditure had still continued to exceed the revenue to an alarming extent; and experience having proved that no such reduction could be made as would bring them to the necessary level, it was expedient for the public safety that the revenue itself should be raised to such an extent as would meet the exigencies of the case. He had no doubt that whatever measures her Majesty's Government might be induced to submit to Parliament they would be found based on principles, and on a policy conservative of the great interests of the country, and such as their Lordships would feel it their duty to approve of. There was another paragraph in her Majesty's Speech which would be regarded with deep interest by their Lordships and by a great part of the country, he meant that which alluded to the law for regulating the importation of foreign corn. It was most desirable that a question of such serious importance – a question affecting not only the agricultural portion of the empire, but bearing such immediate relation to the commerce and manufactures of the country—should be approached with the utmost caution; and that no experiment should be hazarded which had not received the fullest and most serious consideration. It was one of those questions which, from obvious causes, could only be brought forward with advantage by the Government of the country, and he was glad to see that it was likely to receive from her Majesty's Government that mature and sound consideration which the importance of the interests affected by it and the present state of the country demanded. He confidently anticipated, notwithstanding the difficulties which surrounded the question, that some satisfactory settlement would be made, and that a measure would be so adjusted as to prevent too great a fluctuation in the price of corn, while the interests of the grower and the consumer would be respectively attended to. And he must be allowed to express his sense of the great error which those persons had fallen into who had thought fit to place the interests of the manufacturing, the commercial, and the agricultural community at variance with each other. It was his firm belief that there was nothing more untrue than the supposition that a due protection of the farmer was incompatible with the success and advancement of the manufacturer. On the contrary, he believed, nay, he had no doubt, that the prosperity of the manufacturer depended, in a great degree, on the prosperity of the agriculturist. These interests, then, being thus closely connected, any long-continued depression of the one, or ill-advised withdrawal of protection from the other, would operate in the end with equal disadvantage to both parties. The distress which had prevailed to so alarming an extent in many parts of the country, and especially in the manufacturing districts, must be a subject of sincere regret to their Lordships, as it had been of feeling allusion in her Majesty's Speech. The occasional recurrence of distress in a country like this, where so large a proportion of the population depended upon manufactures, was one of those evils which the Government could not entirely prevent: and however wisely the laws might be made, it could never be expected, that prosperity could entirely prevail. He would not attempt to enter into the causes of the distress, or the proper measures of relief, but he was confident, that whatever alleviations could be proposed consistent with the general interests of the country would not be withheld. There were just grounds for hoping, that the negotiations by which our commercial relations with foreign countries had been extended, and the measures to be brought forward, would have the effect of restoring the manufactures of this country to that state of prosperity from which they had fallen. If anything could render the distress now prevailing, more imperative upon our attention, or enhance the anxiety and desire which existed for devising an amelioration of the sufferings of the people, it would be the exemplary patience with which those sufferings had been borne, and the total absence of disturbance in the immediate seats and scenes of that distress. Whatever might be the result of the measures that might be submitted to the consideration of Parliament—whatever might be the degree of beneficial change that might arise, he would venture to remind their Lordships, that all ill-considered changes, that all rash and hazardous experiments, bearing, indeed, a semblance of expediency, but full of unsoundness within, were much to be avoided in the settlement of these important questions; and that though a transitory appearance of relief might be obtained from such sources, yet in the end they might be found to aggravate the evils they were intended to remedy. He would not now detain their Lordships longer, but should conclude by thanking them for the attention and patience with which they had heard him. He begged to move, that a humble Address be presented to her Majesty, thanking her Majesty for her most gracious Speech. His Lordship then read the following Address:—

Most Gracious Sovereign,

We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal Subjects, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, in Parliament assembled, beg leave to return Your Majesty our humble Thanks for Your Majesty's most gracious Speech from the Throne.

We most cordially join with Your Majesty in expressing our deep Sense of Gratitude to Almighty God on account of the Birth of The Prince, Your Majesty's Son; and we beg leave to offer to Your Majesty our heartfelt Congratulations upon an Event which is so well calculated to complete the Measure of Your Majesty's domestic Happiness, and which we, in common with all Your Majesty's faithful and loyal Subjects, have hailed with every Feeling of affectionate Attachment to Your Majesty's Person and Government.

We rejoice in the gratifying Prospect that under a Prince whose youthful Mind will be formed by the Instruction and Example of His illustrious Parents, the Civil and Religious Liberties, the Glory, the Commerce, and the Power of this Kingdom may be transmitted to Posterity.

We assure Your Majesty that we entirely participate in the Satisfaction which Your Majesty has derived from the Presence, in this Country, of His Majesty the King of *Prussia*, who, at Your Majesty's Request, undertook in Person the Office of Sponsor at the Christening of the Prince of *Wales*.

We have learned with much Satisfaction that Your Majesty receives from all Princes and States the continued Assurance of their earnest Desire to maintain the most friendly Relations with this Country.

We assure Your Majesty that we rejoice to learn that Your Majesty has concluded, with the Emperor of *Austria*, the King of the *French*, the King of *Prussia*, and the Emperor of *Russia*, a Treaty for the more effectual Suppression of the Slave Trade: and we beg to express to Your Majesty our Thanks for Your Majesty's gracious Intention, when the Ratifications shall have been exchanged, of communicating the same to Parliament.

We humbly thank Your Majesty for the Directions given by Your Majesty that there shall also be laid before Parliament a Treaty which Your Majesty has concluded with the same Powers, together with the Sultan, having for its Object the Security of the *Turkish* Empire, and the Maintenance of the general Tranquillity.

We are much gratified by the Information that the Restoration of Your Majesty's diplomatic and friendly Intercourse with the Court of *Tehran* has been followed by the Completion of a Commercial Treaty with the King of *Persia*; and we thank Your Majesty for having directed this Treaty to be laid before us.

We desire to express to Your Majesty the lively Satisfaction with which we learn that Your Majesty is engaged in Negotiations with several Powers, which, we trust, by leading to Conventions founded on the just Principle of mutual Advantage, may extend the Trade and Commerce of the Country.

We regret that Your Majesty is not enabled to announce to us the Re-establishment of peaceful Relations with the Government of *China*.

We beg to express our Satisfaction that the uniform Success which has attended the hostile Operations, and the Confidence which Your Majesty places in the Skill and Gallantry of Your Majesty's Naval and Military Forces, encourage Your Majesty to hope that our Differences with the Government of *China* will be brought to an early Termination, and our Commercial Relations with that Country placed on a Satisfactory Basis.

We desire humbly to acquaint Your Majesty that we shall direct our immediate Attention to the State of the Finances and of the Expenditure of the Country.

We have seen with Regret that, for several Years past, the annual Income has been inadequate to bear the Public Charges; and, fully sensible of the Evil which must result from a continued Deficiency of this Nature during Peace, we will carefully consider the best Means of averting it.

We assure Your Majesty that we will give our serious Consideration to the State of the Laws which affect the Import of Corn, and of other Articles, the Produce of Foreign Countries.

Permit us to express our Acknowledgments to Your Majesty for informing us that Measures will be submitted for our Consideration for the Amendment of the Law of Bankruptcy, and for the Improvement of the Jurisdiction exercised by the Ecclesiastical Courts in *England* and *Wales*.

We shall also be ready to consider, with a view to their Revision, the Laws which regulate the Registration of Electors of Members to serve in Parliament.

In common with Your Majesty we deeply regret the continued Distress in the Manufacturing Districts of the Country, and the Sufferings and Privations which have resulted from it, which have been borne with exemplary Patience and Fortitude.

We thank Your Majesty for the Expression of Your Confidence that our Deliberations on the various important Matters which will occupy our Attention, will be directed by a comprehensive Regard for the Interests and permanent Welfare of all Classes of Your Majesty's Subjects; and we join most fervently in Your Majesty's Prayer that they may tend in their Result to improve the National Resources, and to encourage the Industry, and promote the Happiness of Your Majesty's People.

The Earl of *Dalhousie* felt great pleasure in rising to second the Address in answer to her Majesty's most gracious Speech from the Throne. Its various topics had been already so fully alluded to, and the ground before him had been traversed by his noble Friend with so much more skill and ability than he could pretend to, that he felt himself relieved from the necessity of occupying very much of their Lordships' time upon that occasion. It was, perhaps, the less necessary, that he should enter at any length into the topics alluded to in the Address, because he flattered himself with the belief, that there was nothing contained in it, which could necessarily cause that division of opinion which it was always held desirable should be abstained from on an occasion like this. He hoped the Address would carry with it to the Throne the additional recommendation of having been adopted with the unanimous approval and the entire concurrence of their Lordships' House. But if he should be mistaken in that opinion, he would, nevertheless, enter with the most perfect confidence and tranquillity upon the consideration of the first topic, which presented itself in the Address—a topic upon which there could be but one opinion—upon which there was but one unanimous feeling in the House and the country—their Lordships would anticipate that he alluded to the congratulations to her Majesty upon the birth of a Prince of Wales. It was very true, that the time had long since passed away when the birth of an heir to the Throne was a matter of anxiety, as well as of joy to the country, inasmuch, as then depended upon the event, the future destinies of the country, and the happiness and tranquillity of the people. But it was, nevertheless, an event even now, of the most auspicious kind, and worthy of all acceptation, inasmuch as it secured the succession to the British Throne in a direct and unbroken line, and continued the royal authority in the hands of that illustrious family who had so long and so prosperously swayed the sceptre of these realms. Their Lordships would find matter for still further congratulation in seeing, that it was from parents whose public conduct and private life had hitherto earned the respect and attachment of the people, that the future Sovereign of this country had sprung. One of those illustrious personages having been placed upon the Throne of these realms in most extreme youth, had discharged the duties of that high station—laborious and important as they were—with an attention, an industry, and a patience which must have entitled her to the approval and gratitude of all. She had acted with a strength of character, with an ability, and with a resolution to act up to the line of constitutional duty marked out as the course for the Sovereign of these dominions to pursue, that afforded the fairest promise of the prosperity and good government of this country. The other was a Prince who, during the years he had lived amongst us, had displayed such unspotted purity of character, such consummate judgment and integrity of conduct, that not one breath of slander, subtle and penetrating as it was, had ventured to tarnish his name even with a single whisper. He was well aware, that any man who had ventured to speak in such terms as those he had used, laid himself open to unfavoured conclusions. He knew, that many would be ready to say, that compliments paid to persons in such exalted stations, were either flourishes without any meaning, or that they betrayed in a greater or less degree a design to flatter for some ulterior purpose. His words, however, were neither the one nor the other. In adverting to the birth of the Prince of Wales, he had ventured to allude to the character and conduct of his illustrious parents, inasmuch as upon the character of those who had the training of that child up to manhood, whose example would constantly stand before him, and from whom he would first catch his impressions, must, in a great degree, depend whether that Prince, who was destined to become the ruler of these realms, would hereafter be its pride or its aversion. He was sure, that their Lordships would feel pleasure in the birth of a Prince, not merely as a matter of national but also of personal consideration. He knew, that their Lordships felt the loyalty which warmed the heart as well as that which bent the knee, and that, actuated by these feelings, he was convinced, that they would all hasten to offer their congratulations on an event which her Majesty had declared had filled up the measure of her domestic happiness. Could any circumstances add to the auspiciousness of such an event, they would be found in the visit of his Majesty the King of Prussia, who not only had become sponsor on the occasion, but by undertaking a long journey to this country, at an inclement time of the year, had evinced, by his presence, the interest he felt in it. That illustrious personage had conducted himself in such a manner during his residence among them, as justified the high character which he had always borne, and had confirmed all those feelings of kindly attachment which had so long existed in this country towards one of her oldest and most constant allies. In all these circumstances their Lordships would surely find abundant cause for echoing the sentiments contained in the Royal Speech, and for expressing their acknowledgments to Almighty God on account of the birth of the Prince. This their Lordships would do, not because precedents might require it, but because they were sincerely desirous of expressing their gratitude to that Almighty Being for the birth of a Prince under such circumstances, and who, associated in the first days of his infancy with his august parents, would, he believed, prove a glory and a blessing to the empire. Their Lordships would also learn with satisfaction the assurance conveyed in the Speech, that her Majesty continued to receive from all foreign powers the assurance of friendly relations with this country, and their Lordships would all recognise the practical evidence of the sincerity of their intentions in the announcement, that her Majesty had concluded important treaties with the different powers on matters of great national interest. Foremost among these was the treaty with the Emperor of Austria, the King of the French, the King of Prussia, and the Emperor of Russia, having for its object the more effectual suppression of the Slave-trade. Although this treaty merely embodied the principles contained in the treaty which had existed between France and England, it had nevertheless extended the limits within which these principles were to be brought into operation; it had multiplied the means for carrying those principles into effect, and it went to show to the world that Austria, Prussia, and Russia were in direct hostility to that disgraceful trade, which Great Britain had made such great exertions and sacrifices to destroy. Their Lordships would recognise as a result of the friendly feeling among these great powers, the treaty having for its object the security and independence of the Turkish empire by which the various questions which had threatened the peace of Europe had been settled, and the authority of the Sultan confirmed. In this complete co-operation of the great powers would be found the best guarantee that the Turkish empire would continue to remain in the condition in which it had so long existed. Their Lordships would be gratified to hear that there would be laid on the Table a commercial treaty between the King of Persia and this country, and that there was every reason to believe, that the general state of affairs between the two countries would return into that pacific state which existed previous to the late dissensions. In the midst of all these satisfactory circumstances, their Lordships would no doubt regret, that her Majesty had been unable to announce the termination of the war with China. He would confine himself to his proper task by expressing his congratulations on the success that had attended the British arms. He would not say that the success of the forces employed in that country had been as brilliant as, perhaps, that of other forces in other countries, but they had done their duty bravely, and were deserving of the highest praise. While they had fully done their duty in the face of the enemy, they had also done it in the face of such disheartening trials as sickness and suffering, and in spite of the temptations to disorder and to crime which surrounded them, which were quite as formidable as any enemy. Whatever success might attend their Lordships' negotiations, they could rest assured, that as far as force could avail, everything had been accomplished that it was possible to accomplish by the combined forces in China, guided by the abilities of the distinguished officers in command. Their Lordships he did not doubt, would also feel satisfied, that the attention of Parliament had been called to the great questions connected with the finances of the country. It was in vain to shut their eyes to the alarming fact that for several years the annual revenue had not been sufficient to meet the expenditure. He felt persuaded that their Lordships would give their instant attention to this great evil—that they would institute a rigid inquiry into every branch of the public service, and that, after having made such an inquiry, they would be prepared to adopt such measures as Parliament might deem fit. He hoped their Lordships would also be ready to assure her Majesty that they would take into their consideration the law affecting the import of corn. The question of a duty on corn had, during the last year, been the cause of great excitement, and he would not then enter into the discussion of a subject which might create a difference of opinion on the present occasion, when unanimity was so desirable. He should, on all occasions, hesitate to obtrude his poor opinion on a question in which all their Lordships were equally interested, and with which many were more familiar than he was. He would, therefore, merely express his satisfaction at learning that measures relating to the import duty on corn were to be introduced, and that they were to proceed from the only quarter from which they could profitably come, namely, the Government. When the details of these measures came to be unfolded, he felt assured that their Lordships would be prepared to give them their calm consideration, both as regarded their intrinsic merit and their bearing on every class of her Majesty's subjects; their Lordships would also be ready to pay the closest attention to the proposed measures for the amendment of the bankruptcy law, to those for the improvement of the ecclesiastical courts, and also to those which regulate the registration of electors of Members of Parliament, in order that all constituencies might be enabled to exercise their right of voting without any unnecessary expence or delay. There was no part of the Speech in which their Lordships would more concur than in that part which expressed her Majesty's regret at the continued distress in the manufacturing districts of the country, unless it was in that part which stated with what patience and fortitude that distress had been borne notwithstanding the aggravations of a long winter, and all the temptations attendant on poverty and privation. He felt also certain that their Lordships would take into consideration the best means to relieve that distress. He feared that it was beyond the power of human wisdom to prevent altogether the recurrence of distress, but he felt confident that their Lordships' deliberation would be directed by a comprehensive regard for the interests and permanent welfare of all classes. He had thus endeavoured to discharge his duty, although he felt sensible that no man could be more deficient than he was; but he trusted that their Lordships would pardon him if, in treating of these important subjects, he had unnecessarily wasted the time of the House.

Viscount *Melbourne*: I am happy to be able to follow the course which has been justly and truly laid down by the noble Lord who seconded the Address, and to agree with him, that it is both desirable and satisfactory that, upon occasions like the present, unanimity should prevail, and that we should express with one voice our concurrence, both in the Speech which her Majesty has been advised to deliver from the Throne, and in the Address which has been moved by the noble Lord. And if there is nothing in the Speech and Address calculated to provoke any difference of opinion, certainly there has been nothing in the speeches of the noble Mover and Seconder, which could, by possibility, produce this effect, as I do not know that I ever remember to have heard the duty which they have undertaken to-night, discharged with more ability, or in a manner more suitable and becoming, and more appropriate to the occasion. With respect to the noble Lord who seconded the Address (the Earl of Dalho sie), we have witnessed from him in a former Session of Parliament an exertion of great talent and ability, and for the Mover of the Address, I can assure him, that both from personal respect and from ancient acquaintance with his family, there is no one of those, who are the most closely connected with him, and the most deeply interested in his success, who has heard him with more satisfaction, than I have upon the present occasion. With respect to the matter which forms the first paragraph of the Speech, there can be but one feeling —one voice of congratulation expressed to her Majesty on that event, and, in connection with that event, on the arrival in this country of that illustrious monarch, whose coming here has been hailed with so much satisfaction, and whose character has been made the subject of so much just eulogium. I have always looked with peculiar interest to the country over which that illustrious individual reigns; and without meaning any offence to other nations, it has often been to me a subject of deep concern and regret, that so many causes of discord and alienation should have at times arisen, and should have prevented us from acting in unison and harmony with that power with which we are so naturally connected, by the intimate relationship of the two royal families, by the profession of the Reformed Religion, and by the unanimity and agreement of great interests. I trust, therefore, that what has happened on this occasion will be an additional guarantee for the future union of both countries, and for their both acting together on all occasions for the advancement and benefit of the human race, and for the preservation of the peace of Europe.

My Lords, it always appears to me to be a good omen for a country when those who have the government and management of it seem to have a good opinion of its affairs. It is impossible for me not to congratulate the country on the much more favourable and comfortable view which Ministers now take of the state of the nation compared to that which they expressed on the 24th of August last. It is impossible for me not to rejoice, not to feel some degree of pride, that a more intimate acquaintance with the actual position of affairs—that a more intimate knowledge of the transactions then and still going on, has convinced her Majesty's Ministers that affairs were not quite in such a desperate condition as they were then represented to be by noble Lords opposite, more particularly by the noble Lord the President of the Board of Trade, who took the most desponding view of the subject. Knowing as I do his extreme anxiety for the welfare of the country, I cannot but congratulate him on his finding affairs in many quarters of the globe in a much better condition than he anticipated. My noble Friend on that occasion said, that on looking to the anomalous war which we were carrying on in China, he saw no hope of our being able to bring it to a conclusion—that we were engaged with an enemy who would not fight; that we were baffled in our negotiations; and that he saw no hope of this country being able to finish the contest. Now, we are told in the Speech from the Throne, in the drawing up of which I suppose my noble Friend joined, that we may encourage the hope that our differences with China will be brought to an early termination, and our commercial relations with that country placed on a satisfactory basis. The relations of this country with Persia are, I apprehend, also a subject of peculiar interest to the noble Lord, and, as communications recently received from Persia inform us that our affairs there have taken a more favourable turn than was expected, I cannot but congratulate the noble Lord on his finding his situation more comfortable and more agreeable than he anticipated, and that he is not surrounded by the hopeless difficulties and the interminable embarrassment which he at that time expected.

I am also glad to hear a promise held out in the Speech, similar to the recommendation made in August last, for a consideration of the Corn-laws, and also for a general consideration of the subject of import duties. I suppose the measures are intended to be produced to Parliament without any committee of inquiry; and, if so, I beg leave to say that I do hope Ministers will give the sliding-scale their serious re-consideration. Do abandon the sliding scale. Never mind your having pledged yourselves to it. You have done so, to be sure, with great formality and great solemnity, but no solemnity or formality can justify such an absurdity—an absurdity greater than ever has been imagined by Rabelais, or by any of the writers of political satire and romance. I know there is hardly any absurdity so great, that men may not be driven to it by the force of circumstances, by the urgency of party interests and party influences. But this is too much—only consider it, as it really is. In the last session of Parliament, the course of the public affairs made it necessary, that the leaders of the great Conservative party, great in numbers, great in talent, great in property, great in weight and influence of every description, should come down to Parliament, and make something of a declaration upon the subject of the Corn-laws. Well, they consult, they lay their heads together — the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government, my two noble Friends, Lord Stanley and Sir James Graham — down they come with their minds made up, and they cry, you cannot ask us for such declaration—we have been long out of office, we have not had time or means of forming our opinions upon these matters; but one thing we will tell you—and then with a studied agreement in sense, and a studied difference in language, they proceed to say, that come what may, they will abide by the sliding scale. That is, they pledge themselves to the only part of the present Corn-law, for which nothing can be said, which is entirely indefensible. You will never do anything with a sliding scale. You will never do anything by altering the mode of taking the averages. You will not obviate the insecurity and the instability of trade by such means—you will never get the better of fraud and contrivance, and therefore it is that I take the present opportunity to beg of the noble Lord to give the sliding scale his re-consideration before the intended measures are brought under the consideration of Parliament.

The last topic in the Address is that in which her Majesty has been advised to express her deep regret at the distress prevailing in the manufacturing districts of the country. Upon this feeling, and upon the propriety of its expression, there can be no difference of opinion. Whatever can be done by human means either to alleviate or to prevent a return of the distress, ought to be done with the greatest care and the utmost promptitude. I feel the truth of what the noble Lord, who moved the Address, said on this point. But I cannot be a party to any measure or any language which pretends to hold out a permanent remedy for the present distress, and an effectual prevention of its recurrence—the manufactures and commerce of this country depending so much on various circumstances — on demand, taste, fashion, foreign competition, and a hundred other causes; and having such masses of the people engaged in those pursuits and occupations, I fear that we shall only be parties to holding out a delusion, if we said that any measure which we could devise would prevent a recurrence of frequent distress, frequent difficulties, great vicissitudes in wages, and of that misery and destitution consequent on want of employment. I know there are some who attribute the difficulty to the Currency, some to the Corn-laws. I cannot agree with either of these opinions. Whatever portion of the distress the Corn-laws may have caused, I believe that the difficulties and the destitution of the manufacturing population are inseparable from, belonging to, and inherent in that condition of industry and of capital engaged in manufactures which exists in this country; and though I am ready to consider any measure for the purpose of alleviating that distress, I can never hold forth that this can be produced by changes in the Constitution, or by changing the persons who administer the public affairs, I am greatly opposed to this, because, if the existence of national distress is to be looked on as a reason for organic changes in the Constitution, or in the individuals who compose the Government, there is an end of all stability in public affairs. In every state of the country, I fear it will not be difficult to make out such a case of poverty and suffering, as may upon such principles support an argument for great and immediate alteration. We have lived lately in a time of great change and of many new measures. It is supposed that these measures have produced disappointment, and that the Catholic Emancipation, for instance, has not ended in the tranquillity which was expected from it, and that the Reform-bill has not improved the condition or situation of the people at large, and that those who have recommended these measures do not enjoy with the country the same popularity that they formerly did. How this may be, I know not. But this I do know, that if there is disappointment, it does not arise from the vicious principles, or the ill-working of the measures themselves but from the wild, unfounded, exaggerated expectations of their effects which were indulged in and anticipated. A man does not know himself, nor is he a safe judge of his own conduct. But I believe myself never to have contributed to the raising of these wild and illusory hopes. What I have not done before, I will not do now, because I feel certain that measures from which great, extended, and permanent benefit is intended, will be very likely to terminate in failure, and consequently in general discontent.

The Earl of *Ripon* said, that the noble Viscount must, indeed, be well pleased with the Speech from the Throne, inasmuch as he had not found anything on which to hang his observations, except by a reference, for the second time, to some remarks made by him on a former occasion. He was afraid that the noble Viscount was rather sore at the result of those remarks, inasmuch as it had had the effect of placing his noble Friend on that side of the House on which he (the noble Viscount) now sat. If so, he was sorry for it; but he begged to assure his noble Friend, that in moving the Amendment referred to, he was influenced by no personal feeling as against his noble Friend, but solely from a sense of the extreme difficulties in which the course pursued by her Majesty's late Government had placed the complicated interests of the country. The noble Viscount had said, that the affairs which were represented in August last to be full of such difficulties, were now found on an examination to be in a much better condition than was anticipated, and that the war in China was not likely to have the unfortunate issue which he predicted concerning it. He admitted that he did say that he thought it a ridiculous war, but he never said that he saw no prospect of its being brought to an early and satisfactory termination. He had said, that the war was one of a peculiar character, because it was one in which the enemy did not even fight. Had not all the circumstances proved this to be the character of the war? The noble Viscount stated that he had also said that there was no prospect of the re-establishment of peace with Persia. He said the very reverse; he stated that he was glad that peace had been restored, and that he hoped the exertions of their diplomatic agent would restore the former relations between the two countries, and he did not see anything inconsistent between what he had said on that occasion, and what was stated in the Speech from the Throne. In regard to another part of the Speech, the noble Viscount invited the Government to reconsider certain opinions given by certain Members of that Government in the other House of Parliament. "Do not be afraid," said the noble Viscount, "to change your mind, or to abandon principles which you have laid down so positively. This advice came naturally enough from the noble Viscount, for if the Government were to follow that advice, they would only imitate the examples which his own Government had set. He was not called to say more on this subject, and as the measure would soon be before Parliament, any incomplete explanation would be worse than useless; these were subjects which could not be debated on to a good purpose, if they did not endeavour to keep their minds in a calm and equable state. If they introduced passion and violence, instead of reason, they would never obtain that which every one said he wished to have, and which it was the interest of Parliament to effect, namely, a satisfactory settlement of the question alluded to. He would only add, that in the last sentiment expressed by his noble Friend, he most entirely concurred. He thought that it would, indeed, be a fatal delusion if the Government or the Parliament were to take upon themselves to hold out to the people that any course of legislation upon so complicated a piece of machinery as that exhibited in the present condition of England, would be a panacea for the various evils which, from time to time, to a different extent, and under different forms, affected the well-being and prosperity of the country. To that species of delusion he would never allow himself to become a party, because he was satisfied that it could only lead to those fatal consequences which his noble Friend had so emphatically described, and in which he fully concurred.

Lord *Beaumont* would not trespass upon their Lordships' patience for more than a single moment; but having, on a former occasion, expressed a very decided opinion upon the question of the Corn-laws, he felt that he could not properly allow the reference now made to that subject in the Speech from the Throne to pass by without a remark. He owned he was glad to find that her Majesty's Government had determined to take this question into their consideration. He believed that the effect of that determination would be to set many strong feelings of animosity at rest, whilst it would afford to the farmer the advantage of knowing upon what ground his business was to be conducted. He would even make another concession. He would allow that it was not only necessary that the question of the Corn-laws should be taken into consideration, but that there were certain evils in the present system which might be remedied. The evils to which he alluded consisted chiefly in the existing means of taking the averages. Upon that point he thought great ameliorations might be made. It was certainly true that the present returns were false; they were founded upon fictitious scales. It was well known, that a very great number of quarters of corn were returned as having been sold in Hull, and afterwards resold at Wakefield, whilst in point of fact, not one single quarter had been delivered. Instances of this kind were not unfrequent. He admitted that some modification was necessary; but whilst he made that admission, he was far from agreeing with the noble Viscount, that the present scale was an absurdity, and that it was absolutely necessary to abandon it. On the contrary, he regarded it as the only means of preventing a very great fluctuation in price. Therefore, whilst he was willing that this important subject should be reconsidered, he did not think that the deliberation of Parliament upon it should result in anything more than a very slight modification of the present system.

Lord *Brougham* did not rise to enter into all the topics referred to in the Royal Speech, but there were one or two matters involved in it which he did not think he should be performing his duty to the House if he did not take that opportunity of adverting to. Their Lordships would naturally suppose that one of the most important of those subjects was the great, and though (as he earnestly hoped and believed) not any thing like universal distress, yet, the very severe distress which unquestionably prevailed in several important districts of the country. He was far from wishing to present an exaggerated view of it. He believed, indeed, that in respect to some parts of the country, it not only was not necessary, but it would not be possible to give any account which should be liable to the charge of exaggeration. He referred particularly to some parts known to his noble Friend opposite, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and he might, perhaps, refer still more painfully to the almost unprecedented distress which afflicted some districts of Lancashire, and the west of Scotland. He hoped, as he had already stated, that this distress was anything rather than universal, and that, its present severity was only temporary. But he feared he must agree with what had been stated by his noble Friend (Viscount Melbourne) behind him, that great fluctuations of prosperity, great reverses of fortune, great and not unfrequent periods of suffering, were almost necessarily incident to the highly artificial state of things which had grown up in this country, a country in which, although its agriculture would always, no doubt, constitute the most important branch of its industry, was yet in a scarcely inferior degree dependent for its prosperity upon the success of its manufactures. He felt apprehensive, too, that a country manufacturing to so great an extent as England, for years, he might almost say for ages, had done, not only for its own consumption, but for the consumption of a great portion of the world besides, might well expect a gradual decline in certain branches of its industry, in proportion as branches of industry of the like kind should be planted, grow up and flourish in other countries. Nevertheless, this afforded anything rather than a reason for the Government and Legislature not applying themselves, by all the means in their power—by every practical exertion of which they were capable, to stay the decline of those manufactures —to prevent a falling-off in any portion of our trade—to open by every imaginable means, by all the resources of negotiation, still more by all the efforts of legislation—markets now closed against us, and to widen the approach to those which hitherto had not refused to receive the products of our industry. It was in this point of view especially that he perceived with the greatest satisfaction the indication held out in the Speech from the Throne, that her Majesty's Ministers were about to undertake a revision of the Corn-laws, the worst operation of which, in his opinion, had always been their tendency to stunt the manufacturing industry of the country by obstructing the channels of foreign trade. He had always considered that the only effectual way of dealing with this subject, indeed the only safe way, was to legislate for a total repeal of the Corn-laws—gradual and progressive, if you will, but entire and unconditional in its ultimate result. This was the character of the measure he thought would alone do any substantial good; but to correct the errors of those who, on the one hand, thought that the consequence of such a measure would be to lower exceedingly the price of food, and in order to quiet the alarms of those on the other hand, who feared that it would reduce the rent of land, he might refer to the authority of a noble Friend, who he regretted was not here now, connected with the counties of Nottingham and Northamptonshire (Earl Spencer), who moved the Address last August, and who, in recommending the entire repeal of the Corn-laws, stated his conviction that such a measure would neither lower the price of food nor reduce the rent of land. But his noble Friend stated and in this view, at least, he fully agreed, that it would have the effect of opening new channels of foreign trade—of staying the decline of our commerce—of arresting the downfall of our manufactures. That those effects would be the result, he had no more doubt than that he was at that moment standing there and having the honour of addressing their Lordships. Until he saw what measures his noble Friend opposite (the Duke of Wellington) was about to propose, he would only say he hoped the noble Duke and his noble Friend at the head of the Board of Trade, (Lord Ripon), saw the absolute necessity of relieving commerce, not by regulating the Corn-laws alone, but by regulating generally those duties that pressed upon consumption and production. He proceeded now to another matter of great moment. The prospect held out in her Majesty's Speech of the agreement of the various Governments of Europe, with which this country was in negotiation upon some important subjects, must be infinitely cheering to their Lordships. With respect to one of these subjects—the Slave-trade—it was necessary, in consequence of what had recently passed, that he should for a moment solicit the attention of their Lordships, and upon this point he would especially beg the attention of his noble and learned Friend upon the Woolsack to the law on the subject. It was understood that a negotiation was about to be entered into with the United States of America. He purposely abstained from touching upon the general question supposed to be at issue between the United States and the Government of this country with respect to the right of search. He purposely avoided that question at the present moment, not on account of any doubt or difficulty that he felt upon it; for he deemed its importance very much greater than its difficulty; but he was anxious to lend his aid in removing the embarrassment and misunderstanding which had arisen between the two countries, from the capture of the American ship, Creole, and the carrying of that vessel into the Bahamas. Before the negotiation upon that subject was commenced, he thought it would be well to remove all doubt as to how the law of this country stood, in reference to such cases. He was desirous to do this in order that it might be seen how utterly impossible it was, whatever disposition the Government might have, of which he knew nothing, and respecting which he had no right to predicate anything; but whatever disposition they might have to do what it was alleged had been demanded of them, he thought it well that it should at once be clearly understood that do it they could not, for the law of England prevented the possibility of its being done. The case was this: the slaves, on board the Creole, or a portion of them, rose upon the captain and crew on a voyage perfectly legal, according to the law of the nation to which the vessel belonged, slavery in that nation being unhappily up to this hour recognised as lawful. The vessel was engaged in a voyage perfectly lawful, from one port of America to another, with what was called, in the language of the American law, a cargo of slaves. We, in this country, had no right to complain of their being so called, because it was only eight or nine years ago that we by our own law must have called the same persons aboard an English ship trafficking from one port of the English colonies to another, a cargo of slaves. Therefore, it would little become us, from whom the stain of slavery had so recently been wiped out, to turn round upon the Americans, and affect a horror at cargoes of human beings being spoken of, when we, ourselves, only eight or nine years since, were by law bound to use the self-same language. The Creole was sailing with this cargo of slaves from one American port to another. In the course of the voyage, the slaves, as by natural right they had, in his opinion, a title to do—as by natural right every human being had a title to do when a fellow-creature presumed to hold him in bondage against the law of nature, the rights of man, and the will of heaven—rose upon the captain and crew, seized the vessel, and took her into an English port. In the course of the seizure a scuffle took place, and a life was lost. Upon arriving at the English port 120 slaves were landed and liberated, and the remaining eighteen of the slaves thus engaged in the capture of the vessel were taken into custody upon a charge, partly of murder and partly of piracy. Now, if it were demanded that we should give up the slaves, not so charged, every one must immediately perceive that this would be utterly unlawful. By the law of this country, if a slave come to any part of our dominions, in which slavery does not exist by law, either into the United Kingdom itself, or since the 1st of August, 1834, into any of our West-India possessions, from that moment, in whatever way he might have come, whether by leave of his master or against his will, whether by his own free will or brought by force, it signified not which, from that moment he was free, and by the law of this country could not be detained or given up. There was no doubt that such is the law; it had always been so, but it was solemnly so ruled in 1772, in the case of the negro Somerset, as regarded slaves coming away, brought into this country, and since the act of 1833, declared slavery in the West-India colonies, to be utterly unlawful from the 1st August 1834, such is now the law in those colonies so that there existed no power in the Government by which slaves on coming into the port of Nassau could be given up by the Government, or could be dealt with otherwise than as free British subjects. That being the case, the Government of Great Britain had no power by law to give up one of these slaves, or to detain one of them, or to interfere with any one of them in any way whatever. Then the question arose as to the eighteen who were said to be wrong doers, and were charged with felony—with the offence which led to the loss of the life of one of the persons on board, and the seizure of the vessel. Now he ventured to state, that by the law of this country, no person, whether he were a British subject returning from abroad, or an alien coming to our shores, no person charged with having committed an offence out of the jurisdiction of Great Britain could be seized, or detained, or given up to any foreign government whatever, which might demand to have him given up, in respect of the offence with which he was charged. For example, if an Englishman in France were to commit a felony—say even a murder—and return to this country; or if a Frenchman in France were to commit a murder, and escape to this country, the French government might in vain demand of the English Government to have the alleged murderer given up for the purpose of being tried for his offence in France. There had, at different times, no doubt, been treaties between this country and France, and at one time there was a treaty between this country and the United States of America, for the mutual surrender by each government, on the requisition of the other, of persons charged (according to the American treaty of 1795), with the two offences of murder and forgery; and (according to the treaty of 1802 with France) of persons charged with the three offences of murder, forgery, and fraudulent bankruptcy. But before those treaties could be carried into effect in this country it was necessary to pass especial Acts of Parliament, to enable the Government to perform the obligation which it had incurred by the treaties; and accordingly, the 37th George 3rd, gave the powers required for executing the treaty with America and the 42nd George 3rd, commonly called the Alien Act, not satisfied with the general powers of the Alien Act, had a clause, referring to the French treaty, and arming the Government with the power to arrest, detain, and surrender parties. He hoped that their Lordships would excuse his entering into these particulars, on account of the great importance of the question. There was no lawyer who could entertain any doubt upon the subject. It was clear that the surrender of any of the slaves, or even of any of the persons charged with the felony, the alleged murder having been committed beyond the territory of Great Britain, would be utterly without warrant, and by the law of this country, could not possibly be accomplished, even if the Government were disposed to do it. A doubt may possibly arise as to whether the act committed on board the Creole might not be piracy. The facts as stated, did not appear to constitute piracy. If there were any, who considered that a doubtful or debateable point, then he apprehended, that the true course of proceeding would be to put the matter into a course of investigation—to have a judicial inquiry, so that all the facts and circumstances might be fully ascertained, and that the legal import of those facts might be determined. But even if the circumstances connected with the seizure of the Creole amounted to piracy, it did not follow, that those who had been guilty of it should be given up by the Government of England to the government of any other country. If the facts amounted to piracy the parties, though aliens, were triable in our courts. If any doubt lingered in his mind, it was as to the right of delivering up aliens charged with piracy; and if any persons held that such a power of surrender existed, the question might be put in a course of judicial investigation. He would fain hope, that this accidental occurrence of the capture and bringing into port of the Creole, when rightly understood in America, would have no effect in delaying the successful accomplishment of that most important mission upon which his noble Friend opposite (Lord Ashburton) was about to proceed—greatly to the advantage of the negotiations, greatly to the benefit of the two countries, which had a high and an equal interest in perpetuating the friendly relations so essential to the prosperity of both, and greatly to his own honour, in having undertaken, in the circumstances of the case, this most important service. Before sitting down, he must add his congratulations to those of all who had that night addressed their Lordships, both upon the happy event which was announced to the House in the introductory part of the Speech, and upon the auspicious visit to these shores of his Majesty the King of Prussia. He (Lord Brougham) entirely assented to all that had been said in praise of the manner in which that illustrious Sovereign had been received by the people of England—independent of his great merits, such a reception was certain, because he did not believe that there ever was a people inhabiting any part of Europe, whose affection to the Crown, and whose love of royalty exceeded that of the people of England at all times, and never more than at this day. He would go further, and say, that he knew no people—and he had been amongst the inhabitants of almost all countries in Europe—he might say, that he had travelled in, and mixed with the inhabitants of every country in civilised Europe, with the exception of Russia and Spain, and in no country had he ever seen a people so fond of royalty, so devoted to the Throne as the people of England. How did he fortify that position? By referring to the past. When his Prussian Majesty was here in 1814, he might well remember the same overflowing and over-abounding loyalty and devotion; and yet, although the sovereigns whom he then accompanied had returned triumphant with the illustrious warrior in whose presence he (Lord Brougham) had then the honour to speak, and whose ally they had been in those great exploits which immortalized his name, and secured the peace of the world; even on that occasion he (Lord Brougham) would venture to say, his Majesty, when he cast his eye back to it, would not recollect any one indication of greater devotion to the Crown, or greater love of royalty, than he had seen in this year 1842, during his present visit. If it had so happened, that his Majesty had come to this country only a few years after his former visit, he would have found a different state of feeling, he would have seen all our joy turned into sorrow; he would have found the whole people of England plunged into affliction, by the death of the Princess Charlotte, which was positively felt in every family of this country, as if each house had lost a child. Now, his Majesty came to us in the year 1842, and found, that upon the birth of an heir to the Throne, there was as universal an exultation prevailing all over England, as if an heir had been born into every family. Two conclusions might well be drawn by the Prussian monarch, from these circumstances, and in one of them at least, the people of England had an interest. Since his former visit great changes had taken place in the constitution of this country; a very large increase of the privileges of the people had been effected; an ample extension of the representative system had been consummated—an extension which some had called a revolution. He denied, and always should deny, the accuracy of that expression: but a very great reform, a great change, an extended application of the popular principle, an ample increase of the representative power, a liberal admission of the people to the privileges, and within the pale of the constitution, had been effected in the interval between his Majesty's former and present visit to this country. Did his Majesty now find, that there was any ground for the fears entertained, both here and on the Continent, as to the effect of Parliamentary reform? Did he see any of those dangers which the world was told beset the path of the reformer, lest he should overset the balance of the Constitution—lessen the dignity of the Crown—impair the loyalty of the subject—and shake our institutions to their foundation? On the contrary, does he not now find, if any change at all, an increase of devotion and loyalty to the Crown, notwithstanding all the extension of the privileges of the people? Then, peradventure, one conclusion might be drawn by that illustrious Monarch, with respect to his own country, and another conclusion by us with respect to ours. There was not at this time—he believed there never was—a more philanthropic, a more kindly-disposed Prince, upon any of the Thrones of Europe—a Prince of liberal views—a Prince universally beloved by his own people, universally respected abroad, and, unlike many Princes (at least in former times) of him it might be said, that he was the more beloved and the more respected, the better he was known. He hoped and believed, that the result of that Prince's observations in this country woud encourage him in the prosecution of those most beneficial reforms which he was making in the constitution of his own country, because it would show him that there was no danger, but only safety, in the fulfilment of the promises made by his predecessors - promises on the faith of which those predecessors raised the Prussian people, and were enabled, by their aid, to repel the invasion of France and to restore the independence of the Prussian crown. Yes, his Prussian Majesty would gather from his observation of this country, that the giving a representative constitution to his own people, would be safe and beneficial, and even tend to the security of the Crown and the monarchy itself. He drew the same conclusion with respect to the franchise in this country. Those who, ten years ago, had been alarmed at the idea of permitting its extension, would, ere long, have to consider how the franchise could be yet further reasonably, judiciously, but effectively extended, so as to admit within the pale of the constitution the great bulk of the working classes. He had concurred with his noble Friend the noble Viscount (Viscount Melbourne) in an argument he used upon the Corn-laws on the first day of the last Session. His noble Friend warned their Lordships and the landed interest generally, against allowing a state of things to continue that was neither safe for them nor for the Constitution. Here, said the noble Viscount, was a code of laws made by one House of Parliament wholly composed of landowners, and by another in great part composed also of landowners. That was not a safe state of things. That, said he, was a state of things liable to suspicion and jealousy. That, said he, ought to be altered for the safety of the landowners, and of the two Houses of Parliament themselves. So he (Lord Brougham) thought it was not a safe state of things either for the two Houses of Parliament, or for the Crown, or for the general stability of the Constitution, that there should be a representative system, framed by two Houses, both of which consisted wholly of proprietors of some kind, a system so framed as to exclude all save those who happened to be the owners of property. In what way they ought to admit the other classes—by what degrees—by what slow degrees if their Lordships pleased—but in what way they should break down the line of distinction which placed all the property of the country on one side, and all the numbers not being possessed of property, on the other, if not in conflict, at least in opposition to each other—by what rule, by what means by what steps, he cared not how slow and gradual the operation, and what was the best and most effectual way safely to get rid of this state of things which thus divided the country, and endangered its institutions, he would not now stop to inquire. But that something must be done, and that speedily, to shew they were not determined to maintain that line of distinction, he was as perfectly satisfied as he was of any of the propositions of law or of fact to which he had had the honour of directing their Lordship's attention that night. These were topics, upon which, he well knew, he had not the happiness of agreeing with the majority of their Lordships, or possibly with any considerable body of their House. But that difference of opinion did not extend to the point on which he had before addressed their Lordships—namely, the negotiations with foreign powers, and the slavery question; and he could now only repeat his hope, that the negotiation to which he had particularly alluded might be brought to a speedy and a happy termination.

Earl *Fitzwilliam* felt somewhat anxious to say a few words on the present occasion, and the more so because he was apprehensive if he remained altogether silent, motives might by attributed to him which in reality had no influence on his mind. He felt entire gratitude to her Majesty's Ministers, for the course they had taken, as far as he was able to divine what that course would be. He felt entire gratitude to her Majesty's Ministers, for having drawn the attention of the House to that particular law to which, under auspices less favourable, it had been his lot during several preceding sessions, but with no great success, to bring under the notice of a majority of that House. Although he had had devoted friends to the cause in which he had embarked, both he and they had alike failed in impressing the importance of that question upon a majority of their Lordships' House. A large majority, indeed, had negatived the proposition he had ventured to propound to them, and yet, in less than three years since the time he had first endeavoured unsuccessfully to draw attention to this subject, he had the great satisfaction of hearing that question recommended to the consideration of Parliament, first by the Administration in power six months ago, and subsequently by an Administration composed of those noble Lords who had overturned the former Government, not merely by their power in this House—for by that power alone they could not have effected it—but by the assistanee they were enabled to obtain from the agricultural classes—from the landlords down to, he believed, the agricultural labourer, for they had enlisted even the labourers in their cause, though it was clear that *their* interests were diametrically opposed to them. So it was, however; the land-owners had succeeded in impressing upon the minds of tenants that they were interested in the maintenance of the Corn-law, and yet he had now the satisfaction to hear that the Ministers recommended the Corn-law to the consideration of Parliament. He did not precisely know in what relation to the Government, or what was the exact position in the Ministry of a noble Duke of great authority in this country, whom every man regarded with the highest respect. That noble Duke had been for many years the leader of the party now in power; and though he held no public office, was a sort of viceroy over the Ministry; but he confessed it was a marvel to him, exemplifying the old adage, that "marvels never cease," that that noble Duke, the presiding genius of the Ministry, holding a seat in the Cabinet without office, whose particular affection for the Corn-laws was well known, should concur with his Colleagues in recommending the Corn-laws to the consideration of Parliament. After all he had heard from the noble Duke relative to the good-working of that law, he confessed it astonished him that the noble Duke should concur with the other Members of the Administration in their present recommendation. Something it was to be presumed, was to follow from that recommendation. Was that something to be so small, that it would require a political microscope to discover it? He felt no assurance that the measure was not to be exceedingly small, because another noble Duke had within a short period ceased to be a Member of her Majesty's Government. He wished to know, and he apprehended that a great number of persons out of doors would also be desirous to know what was the difference between the Ministers and the noble Duke who had just quitted the Government—most honourably and conscientiously, no doubt. The noble Duke had quitted office without looking to favour or reward, that he might go forth free, as a man who had sacrificed power and office that he might adhere to and protect those whose interests were his especial regard. He confessed he felt also some curiosity to know the particular point of difference in opinion between the noble Duke who had retired and his noble Friend (the Duke of Buccleugh) who had succeeded to the office, because his noble Friend had distinguished himself too—with great propriety no doubt—as a leader of the agricultural interest, and one most anxious to protect it. The noble Duke (Buccleugh) was anxious, no doubt, to protect the agricultural interest, and yet, he had come into a Government on the eve of proposing a measure which the noble Duke, who had quitted office, thought so injurious to agriculture that he had found himself absolutely under the necessity of retiring. If the noble Duke (the Duke of Buckingham) had evinced complete indifference as to office, which he (Earl Fitzwilliam) believed was not the case, for he had not heard that the noble Duke had been particularly pressed to become a Member of the Government by those who formed the Administration; if he had been an unwilling labourer, then it might easily be understood that he might have seized upon some light and trivial occasion as an opportunity for retiring. But he had not heard that was the case, and he was, therefore, of opinion, that some great and important change was in contemplation. The greater the better. He hoped it would be a large and comprehensive measure; he hoped that the noble Duke, the inspiring genius of the Cabinet, was about to deal with the Corn-laws as he did with the Catholic question. He hoped the noble Duke was about to commence a campaign in legislation as useful and as important as any of those he had successfully carried on upon the continent of Europe. He hoped the noble Duke was about to begin a campaign in 1842 similar to that he carried through in 1829. The cases were parallel. Many of their Lordships, who were yesterday perhaps two hundred miles away from that spot, and were by the power of art and mechanical science enabled to reach the scene of their duties with such wonderful rapidity, little thought, while in the retirement of their country seats, that upon their arrival in town they were to be regaled with an invitation to consider the Corn-laws. It would be a great sacrifice to many noble Lords, even as it was in 1829, when they were called upon to swallow that large measure of Catholic Emancipation. He did not wish it to be supposed that he was one of those who considered the repeal of the Corn-laws as a nostrum for all the evils that were complained of. He had never stated that, nor did he believe it. But his opinion upon the Corn-law was, that of all the various causes which could be assigned for the evils that now prevailed in this country, there was no one cause that was anything like so influential in having produced them as the Corn-law. That was his opinion, but he did not say that even a large measure of alteration would remedy all those evils, nor indeed, did he believe that all the evils were remediable by any means. He believed they had gone too far. He did not think that the country could go back in all respects to the state of commercial and manufacturing prosperity that had once prevailed. The decline of prosperity had not been sudden—it had been a gradual declension. Each succeeding year had been worse than its predecessor; and even at the present moment, he had understood from authority which he need not name, that there was not the slightest manifestation of improvement. The Government had gone on too long in an exclusive commercial system, and they could not now recover the position they had lost. But that was no reason why they should not do their best, and try to arrest the rapidity of that decadence that was going on. He had often urged their Lordships to look this question boldly in the face, and devise some remedy for the evils which the system had entailed. At last, not, of course, influenced by anything he had advanced, but by the importance of the subject—at last pressing itself irresistibly upon their minds, their Lordships did apply themselves to the question. And what was the consequence? A majority of the House had said to the late Government, you shall not be allowed to do this—you are the few, and we are the many, and we will do it ourselves. When he alluded to the great change that had recently taken place in the Cabinet, he was convinced, that the majority of that House, and the individuals composing that majority were not persons to think that it was of no consequence who were Members of the Government, and to say we must look to measures and not to persons; because he remembered, that about five months ago, at the opening of the first Session of the present Parliament, the noble Lord now President of the Board of Trade, presented an Address to her Majesty, containing a paragraph to this effect:—

> "We feel it to be our duty humbly to represent to your Majesty, that it is essential to the satisfactory result of our deliberations that your Majesty's Government should possess the confidence of the House and of the country, and respectfully to represent to your Majesty that that confidence is not reposed in the present advisers of your Majesty."

That was a pretty pregnant proof that the majority sometimes looked to men as well as to measures. It was right so to do, and therefore he thought that great curiosity would be expressed to know what had been the cause of the important change that had taken place in the Cabinet within the last few days. He would repeat that the larger the proposed measure the better. Above all things, he would say, with his noble Friend "no sliding scale." The sliding scale was a principle of protection, and the principle of protection was the principle of exclusion, and exclusion was inconsistent with the commercial prosperity of this country. Their Lordships must at once make up their minds—they must not oscillate between protection and non-protection. They must not hesitate—if they did, they would be only patching and darning the wretched rag of a garment in a manner that would only render it more miserable and noxious. He presumed they would at no distant period be informed what the measure was to be. He trusted it would be large and efficient, and not framed upon the principle of protection. If it were framed upon such a principle it would fail in accomplishing the objects in view — the lowering the price of the first necessary of life, and encouraging a constant commercial intercourse between this country and those who had no other commodity to interchange with us but the raw produce of their own soil.

The Duke of *Wellington:* My Lords, I wish to be permitted to say only a few words as to what the noble Earl seems to consider my want of consistency in having agreed to the paragraph relating to the Corn-laws in her Majesty's Speech from the Throne, after having voted against his motion upon the same subject in a former Session of Parliament. I beg, my Lords, to decline saying a single word, or adverting to a single topic which might have the effect of suspending for a moment the good temper which so happily prevails in your Lordships' House on the present occasion. I beg leave, my Lords, not to enter into any detail at present on the measure which is intended to be submitted to the other House of Parliament by her Majesty's servants. That measure will come in time before your Lordships, when those who concur in bringing it forward will be able, I doubt not, to show that they have acted consistently, and will be able to give us reason as well for the retirement from office of the noble Duke to my right as for the acceptation of office by my noble Friend on my left. I think, on all these points, they will be enabled to give entire satisfaction to your Lordships and to the country. I do not think that I ought to say more to this House now, and, at least, I am sure that I cannot say more with any advantage to what seems to be the object of your Lordships, which is, that we should depart from this debate without acrimony of feeling, and with perfect unanimity.

The Duke of *Buckingham* said he should satisfy, as far as possible, the curiosity of the noble Earl opposite. The noble Lords on the other side were aware of the opinions which he had ever expressed on the subject of the Corn-laws. Those opinions still remained the same, and totally unchanged. He had the misfortune to differ with the Cabinet on the measure which they had thought it their duty to bring forward in Parliament, and he had immediately felt it to be his duty to retire from the office he had held. By this conduct he had not forfeited the opinion he held from the country. Since he had the honour of holding a seat in the Cabinet he had not the misfortune of differing on any other point—and the Government might be assured that, although he differed from them on the details of this measure, and that he was determined to give his opposition to it, they should have on all other subjects his sincere and honest support.

Address agreed to.

Address to his Royal Highness Prince Albert.] Lord *Wharncliffe* proposed the following Address of Congratulation to Prince Albert on the birth of the Prince of Wales.

> "That a Message be sent from this House to His Royal Highness Prince Albert of Saxe Cobourg and Gotha, to congratulate His Royal Highness on Her Majesty's happy Delivery, and the Birth of The Prince of Wales; to assure His Royal Highness of the sincere Part this House takes in an Event which so nearly interests the domestic Happiness of His Royal Highness, and to express the Satisfaction with which we see this Pledge that the Civil and Religious Liberties of this Country will be perpetuated under a Race of Princes descended from his Royal Highness."

Agreed to, *nemine dissentiente*, and the Marquess of Exeter, and the Lord Colville of Culross were ordered to carry the said Message.

Chairman of Committees.] The Duke of *Wellington* moved that the Earl of Shaftesbury be appointed to the office of chairman of committees.

The *Lord Chancellor*, in seconding the nomination, observed that he could not do so without bearing his testimony to the valuable services which the noble Earl had rendered to the House on former occasions.—Agreed to.—Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, February 3, 1842.

Minutes.] New Writs were issued for West Cornwall, Lord Boscawen Rose having become Earl of Falmouth.
For Leominster, James Wigram, Esq. having been made a Vice-Chancellor.
For Bandon Bridge, J. D. Jackson, Esq. appointed Solicitor-General for Ireland.
For Dublin University, right hon. T. Lefroy appointed Baron of Exchequer (Ireland).
For King's Lynn, right hon. Sir Stratford Canning having accepted the Chiltern Hundreds.
For Liverpool, William Cresswell Cresswell, appointed a Judge.
For Taunton, E. T. Bainbridge, Esq. having accepted the Chiltern Hundreds.
For Clackmannan, and Kinross, hon. J. R. Abercromby having accepted the Chiltern Hundreds.
Election Petitions. Complaining of undue Elections at Bridport, and Sunderland.
Bill. 1°. For more effectually preventing Clandestine Outlawries.

Corn-laws.] Sir *Robert Peel*,—Mr. Speaker, I wish now to give notice, that on Wednesday next I shall move, that this House resolve itself into a committee of the whole House for the purpose of considering the laws which affect the import of foreign corn. I would have named an earlier day, even Monday, but there are some papers which the House ought to be first put in possession of, and which hon. Members should have an opportunity of considering more maturely than they could have if the motion were fixed for so early a day as Monday. I believe, that in giving this early notice, I shall not interfere with the views of any Gentlemen who might be entitled to address the House, and as I apprehend that there will be no Order of the Day, I should be unwilling to postpone my motion till Friday; but I think that any Gentleman who may be disposed to insist on his right, will, on further consideration, not demand a preference on Wednesday, but that considering that it is the first Wednesday of the Session, and that there is no Order of the Day, he will waive his right to suit the views of her Majesty's Government.

Address in Answer to the Speech.] The Earl of *March* said,—Sir: In rising to move an humble Address in Answer to Her Majesty's most gracious Speech from the Throne, I am satisfied I am only expressing the feelings of this House, and here, I state that they concur in the voice of the nation which has hailed with the liveliest joy and gratification, the safety, under the blessing of Divine Providence of our beloved Sovereign, and the birth of the Prince of Wales. If any thing could have added to that feeling of joy, so universally expressed, it would be, Sir, the gratification, which we all must feel, that the christening of the youthful Prince was celebrated under the auspices of a Monarch who is eminently distinguished as a patron of the arts and sciences, and a firm and zealous supporter of the Protestant faith. I am sure, Sir, that every Member of this House, will, with one accord, offer their humble and heartfelt congratulations to Her Majesty and her Royal Consort, on an event, with which Her Majesty's happiness, and that of her people, is so closely and intimately connected. Sir, I have now shortly to allude to some of the other topics which are contained in the Speech; and foremost among them I must refer to the friendly feelings which exist between foreign powers and this country, holding out as it does, the prospect, that one of the greatest of all blessings, Peace, may long be maintained. It is impossible not to feel grateful, Sir, to every Administration, which has done its utmost to put an end to Slavery and to the Slave-trade, and I trust, that the Treaty, which it appears is now pending, may lead to the total abolition of a traffic, which is abhorrent to human nature, and annihilate so unhallowed a system. We are unfortunately still engaged in hostilities with the Chinese Empire, but which war could not be avoided without compromising our national honour, and I turn with pride and satisfaction to the success which has attended her Majesty's arms in that part of the globe, where great victories have been obtained with but small sacrifice of human life, owing to the judgment and skill of our officers, and the bravery and good discipline of our sailors and of our soldiers. The allusion in the Speech, Sir, to the distress which unfortunately prevails in some parts of the country, and the knowledge of the truth of it, cannot fail to excite in every man's mind the deepest feelings of commiseration, and an earnest desire, if possible, to ameliorate the condition of those of our fellow subjects, whose sufferings under these trying and painful circumstances, have proved themselves loyal to their Sovereign, and obedient to the laws of this country. With respect to finance, I believe, Sir, it is the opinion of the great majority of the people in this country, that the attention of this House, should with the least possible delay, be directed to this most important subject; that it will no longer do to permit our expenditure to exceed our income; indeed, I fear, after the efforts of former Administrations and successive Parliaments, we cannot hope still further much to retrench our expenditure, but, that if we desire to maintain our Indian possessions, to protect our Colonies, and our commerce. We cannot reduce much, if at all, the estimates for the navy and for the army. With respect to the former, although, perhaps, the number of ships in commission may hereafter be diminished, yet it would appear most desirable that the men of war should never leave the ports of England without being sufficiently manned, so as to be ready at all times to perform any and every service which may be required. With respect to the army, sir, I do feel that it is of the greatest importance that the numbers of that force should be sufficient to enable the commander-in-chief to relieve frequently the regiments stationed in India and the West Indies. I believe, Sir, it is true economy to do so—for I am satisfied after the experience we have had, that such a system of relief tends much to promote the health of our troops, and prevent the sickness and mortality we have had so often cause to deplore. Sir, it appears to me, then, that we ought to meet our difficulties openly and manfully, and recommend new taxes, taking care, however, that these burthens should press as lightly as possible on the poorer classes of society. With respect to the Corn-laws, I much prefer that the difficult and delicate task of revising them should be undertaken by an Administration who have declared themselves favourable to the agricultural interest, than by those who proposed an eight shilling fixed duty, and many of whose supporters declared themselves against any protection whatever. The landed interest does not seek any greater protection than that which is sufficient to enable them, burthened as they are by general and local taxation, to compete with the foreign grower. I hope, Sir, that this question may be discussed in this House with calmness and moderation, avoiding every thing likely to array one class of society against another, not forgetting that the home market is of great importance to the manufacturer on the one hand, and that on the other, the manufacturing population, are great consumers of the produce of our soil, and that the interest of both is one and the same. I am aware, Sir, that my individual opinions are not likely to have any weight in this House or the country. But I have felt it a duty to myself, and to my constituents, whose interests I have the honour to represent, briefly to state my views on the subjects I have touched upon, and I beg to thank the House for the indulgent and patient hearing which they have been pleased to extend to me on the present occasion. Having, Sir, great confidence in her Majesty's present Advisers, and coinciding with the sentiments expressed in the Speech delivered by her Majesty, this day, from the Throne, I beg to move the Address, which I hold in my hand.

Most Gracious Sovereign,

We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled, beg leave to express to Your Majesty our humble thanks for Your Majesty's most gracious Speech from the Throne.

We assure your Majesty, That we most cordially join with Your Majesty, in expressing our deep sense of gratitude to Almighty God, on account of the birth of the Prince, Your Majesty's Son, and we beg leave to offer to Your Majesty our heartfelt congratulations, upon an event which completes the measure of Your Majesty's domestic happiness, and which we, in common with all Your Majesty's faithful and loyal Subjects, have hailed with every feeling of affectionate attachment to Your Majesty's Person and Government.

We participate in the satisfaction which Your Majesty has derived from the presence, in this Country, of His Majesty the King of Prussia, who, at Your Majesty's request, undertook, in person, the office of Sponsor, at the Christening of the Prince of Wales.

We have learned with much satisfaction, that your Majesty receives from all Princes and States the continued assurance of their earnest desire to maintain the most friendly relations with this country.

We rejoice to learn, that Your Majesty has concluded with the Emperor of Austria, the King of the French, the King of Prussia, and the Emperor of Russia, a Treaty for the more effectual suppression of the Slave Trade, and we beg leave to express to Your Majesty our Thanks for Your Majesty's gracious intention, when the Ratifications shall have been exchanged, of communicating the same to Parliament.

We humbly thank Your Majesty for the directions given by Your Majesty, that there shall also be laid before Parliament a Treaty which Your Majesty has concluded with the same Powers, together with the Sultan, having for its object the security of the Turkish Empire, and the maintenance of the general tranquillity.

We are much gratified by the information that Your Majesty's diplomatic and friendly intercourse with the Court of Tehran, having been restored, a commercial Treaty with the King of Persia has been completed, and we thank Your Majesty for having directed this Treaty to be laid before us.

We learn with great satisfaction that Your Majesty is engaged in negociations with several Powers, which, Your Majesty trusts, by leading to Conventions founded on the just principle of mutual advantage, may extend the trade and commerce of the Country.

We regret that Your Majesty is not enabled to announce to us the re-establishment of peaceful relations with the Government of China.

It is gratifying to us to learn, that the uniform success which has attended the hostile operations directed against that Power, and the confidence which Your Majesty places in the skill and gallantry of Your Majesty's Naval and Military Forces, encourage Your Majesty to hope, that our differences with the Government of China will be brought to an early termination, and our commercial relations with that Country placed on a satisfactory basis.

We thank Your Majesty, for having directed the Estimates for the year to be laid before us:

We assure Your Majesty, that You may rely with entire confidence on our disposition, while we enforce the principles of a wise economy, to make that provision for the service of the Country which the public exigencies require.

We beg leave humbly to acquaint Your Majesty, that we shall direct our immediate attention to the state of the Finances and of the Expenditure of the Country.

We have seen with regret, that for several years past the annual income has been inadequate to bear the public charges, and, fully sensible of the evil which must result from a continued deficiency of this nature during Peace, we will carefully consider the best means of averting it.

We assure Your Majesty that we will take into our consideration the state of the laws which affect the Import of Corn, and of other articles the produce of Foreign Countries.

We desire to express our grateful acknowledgments to Your Majesty, for informing us that measures will be submitted for our consideration for the amendment of the Law of Bankruptcy, and for the improvement of the jurisdictions exercised by the Ecclesiastical Courts in England and Wales.

We shall also be ready to consider, with a view to their revision, the Laws which regulate the registration of Electors of Members to serve in Parliament.

In common with Your Majesty, we deeply regret the continued Distress in the Manufacturing Districts of the Country, and the sufferings and privations which have resulted from it, which have been borne with exemplary patience and fortitude.

We humbly thank Your Majesty for the expression of Your confidence that our deliberations on the various important matters which will occupy our attention, will be directed by a comprehensive regard for the interests and permanent welfare of all classes of Your subjects, and we assure Your Majesty that we join most fervently in Your Majesty's prayer, that they may tend in their result to improve the national resources, and to encourage the industry and promote the happiness of Your Majesty's people.

Mr. *Beckett*: In rising, Sir, to second the motion which has been so ably submitted to our consideration by the gallant and noble Lord the Member for Sussex, I beg that you, Sir, and every hon. Member of this House, will accept of that apology which I feel it to be my duty to offer in trespassing upon the attention of the House at a moment which calls upon us to determine what may be our most dutiful, what our most respectful and becoming acknowledgement of that gracious communication with which we have been honoured from the Throne. Sir, the Address which has been so ably moved and so powerfully advocated by the noble Lord, will, I hope, meet with that reception from the House to which it appears to me to be entitled,—for whether we look to the topics of which it is composed, or to the language in which those topics are embodied, the House will, I think, perceive that such regard has been paid to its own character as well as to the dignity of that illustrious Personage to whom it is presented, as will induce it to wish that this Address should go forth to the world under the sanction and with the authority of our unanimous vote. Sir, among the many subjects of congratulation, there is no one of more importance than that of the birth of the Prince of Wales, and I should very much miscalculate the feelings of this House if I did not say, that no congratulations from any portion of her Majesty's subjects can be more warm than those with which this House desires to approach the throne upon this auspicious event—no prayers can be more sincere than those which are offered up by the Members of this House, that all the virtues and excellencies of his royal parents may be combined and perpetuated in the person of this youthful prince; and as to that baptismal ceremony by which the royal infant has been brought within the pale of our

Christian community, hallowed and sanctified as that ceremony was by the aspirations of parental affection, and a nation's prayers, dignified as it was by the presence of foreign royalty,—this House must regard it with the greatest satisfaction; and, Sir, in looking at it we may hope that in the introduction of another British prince within the pale of our Church, we have added another pillar to its support, arising from that stock which has already afforded to it, so many and such able defenders. I cordially approve of the next portion of the Address,—viz., that which congratulates her Majesty upon the assurances which we receive of almost universal Peace, and it must be satisfactory to this House to perceive the collateral evidence which is afforded to these assurances by the pacific position assumed by all the great powers of Europe. France, that great nation, whose innate love for the profession of arms is proverbial, is fast laying aside the munitions of war, and taking the more quiet attitude of peace and repose. Spain, so long a prey to the desolation of foreign invasion and internal discord, may surely be hoped to profit by wiser councils, and return once more to the cultivation of her own fruitful provinces; another great evidence of unequivocal peace and concord among the great powers of Europe, may be found in that natural compact into which they have entered, to promote the abolition of the Slave-trade. With regard to more distant countries, the position of China demands some notice, and whilst we rejoice in the triumph of our arms, I trust, that when that great and extraordinary country shall find, that British valour is equalled by British generosity, by British forbearance, and by British conciliation, she too will be brought within the bonds of peace and friendship with this country. With regard to the United States of America, although the friends of humanity must lament that one signature is still wanting to this compact for the abolition of Slavery, and that one consent is still withheld; let us hope that when these Independent States perceive that this engagement can be entered into without any compromise of their national honour, they will at once become the most zealous in the abolishment of that most abominable and disgraceful traffic. With respect to that portion of the Address relating more immediately to our internal policy, I think that the House cannot sufficiently thank her Majesty for directing its attention to subjects which so deeply affect the interests of all classes of the community—I allude to the subjects of corn, of finance, and other fiscal regulations relating to the food of the people. With respect to finance, no individual in this House will, I am persuaded, for one moment advocate a system which allows the national expenditure so greatly to exceed the national income. With respect to the Corn-laws, I congratulate the House that at last a day is fixed when this great national question will be submitted to our considerations. I hope, too, whatever the event of our discussion may be, that due regard will be paid as well to the interests of agricultural labour, as to the power of consumption of the manufacturing classes. I cannot pass over that paragraph of the Address which alludes to the great distress now existing in various parts of the country, without making one or two observations on the state of the district with which I have the honour to be connected. Six months ago, statements were made in this House respecting the distress then existing in the manufacturing and commercial district which were considered appalling by all who heard them, but it is my painful duty to say, that at this moment that distress is greatly aggravated. If doubts be entertained upon this point, let reference be made to the different boards of our wokhouses, where it will be found that applications for relief are daily increasing, and in many instances, by persons who have no long time ago been contributors to the rates; let reference be also made to the offices of our benevolent and visiting societies, where the melancholy fact will be confirmed that those who have been the dispensers of charity are now supplicants for its aid in their own persons, and I am much afraid that a strict examination into the condition of the great body of the people, would prove that the general frame of society is sinking towards the verge of poverty. I rejoice that measures for remedying these evils, have undergone the patient investigation of the right hon. Baronet, in whose government, this House and the country have placed such implicit confidence; and whilst no one can participate in that confidence more than myself, I cannot help expressing a hope, that, whatever those measures may be, they will be based upon the principle of finding regular employment for the people, and a sufficient means to provide for their subsistence, believing as I do, that all attempts at national prosperity, or individual enjoyment of life, unless recognizing these principles will be vain and futile. The history of our country tells us, that Parliament has often been called together on great emergencies, and happily also tells us that the wisdom of Parliament has often found remedies for the evils submitted to it, but I will venture to say, that no previous Parliament was ever looked to with more anxiety than the present, nor did the condition of the people ever more seriously deserve our sympathy and consideration—the people have suffered severely but they have suffered patiently—their loyalty to their Queen has never for one moment abated, their confidence in the wisdom of Parliament remains unshaken, and their hope is still strong in the exertions of an able and energetic Government. Sir, the only hope or wish which I entertain in seconding this Address which has been so ably moved by the noble Lord, is, that it may receive that approbation from the House to which I think it is entitled, and that it may be the prelude to such other wise resolves and good proceedings on the part of this House, as may prove to the people of this country that their reliance on the wisdom of Parliament has not been placed in vain.

Mr. *Ewart* said, he could not but accord with that portion of the speech of the hon. Seconder of the Address in which he pathetically, but too truly, described the misery, the increased misery of the manufacturing population. For that misery he trusted her Majesty's Government were prepared with some efficient remedy; and in the course of the Speech from the Throne he rejoiced to find that one of the remedies traced out was one suggested—in part and in principle at least—by the committee of that House appointed to investigate the subject of the import duties. He trusted it was the intention of her Majesty's Government to adopt some, at least, of the suggestions contained in that report; and he might add his hope that their attention would be directed to one important article, on which the import duties were still high, and which had almost become a necessary of life in this country; he alluded to the article of sugar. He apprehended it would not be disavowed, even by some of the hon. Gentlemen opposite, that their predictions as to the price of sugar had not been verified. He believed it would be allowed by the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel), that during the last month at least the price of sugar had risen to such an extent as to interfere materially with its consumption; and that evidence had been laid before the House that a reduction of the duties would be conducive to the welfare of the people, while it would increase the revenue of the country. He trusted that another recommendation contained in the evidence before the committee on the import duties would be accomplished—namely, the reduction of the duty on coffee. That reduction was not more imperatively called for by the commercial interests of the country, and a just financial policy, than it was by the altered habits of the people. The consumption of coffee and sugar had extensively and most beneficially supplied the place of spirits and other articles of a deleterious nature. While touching on this topic, he might be allowed to refer to that portion of the Address which alluded to the treaties with foreign powers, and to express his hope that her Majesty's Government might not leave entirely out of contemplation the completion of a commercial treaty with Holland. It was the wish of the commercial interests of the country that such a treaty should be concluded, and particularly with reference to the island of Java. The productions of Java were largely absorbed by Holland; but Holland was quite unequal to the supply of Java with manufactures in return. The production of one of the articles to which he had alluded—sugar, had recently increased to a great extent in that island. In 1831 the amount of sugar produced in Java did not exceed 8,000 tons; at present the annual produce was 65,000 tons. It was easy to conceive how the interchange of that article would benefit our consumer, while our manufacturer would gain a great advantage by the export of his manufactures. He knew not whether he were justified in drawing such a conclusion, but from the tenor of the observations of the noble Mover and the hon. Seconder of the Address, rather than from the Address itself, he drew the inference that it was the intention of her Majesty's Government to propose something like a property-tax. He, for one, would openly and sincerely express his conviction that a fair and honest property-tax, which would relieve the labour, while it unfettered the commerce of the country, if properly and equitably imposed upon property, would be beneficial to the nation. Such a tax, however, should be fair and equitable, applying equally to landed as to funded and mere personal property; and with the assurance that it would be fair and equitable, not pressing unequally upon different interests, he would be disposed to support such a measure. The right hon. Baronet had adverted to his intention of disclosing his somewhat long-concealed views on the subject of the Corn-laws. One branch of that subject had pressed upon his (Mr. Ewart's) attention, that which referred to the trade of this country with the United States of America. After the admissions of the hon. Seconder of the Address, it would be almost supererogatory to dwell upon the depressed state of manufactures in this country; but it was appaling to reflect that a portion of our most important manufactures—our cotton manufactures, indicated the deepest suffering. The consumption of cotton, which last year approached to about 24,000 bales per week, had this year fallen to nearly 21,000 bales per week. This being a most material article of British manufacture, and the United States of America being our best customers, he thought it most desirable that we should draw still closer our bonds of commercial intercourse with that great and increasing country. He feared—he trusted without reason—that the proposed amendment of the Corn-laws would not tend to bring into this country, in exchange for its manufactures, the natural produce—the corn—of America. We were already taking from America one of its natural products—cotton; and he would hail with peculiar satisfaction another bond of commercial union formed by taking from them another of their natural products—their corn. While adverting to this topic he would remind the House of the observations made by the Secretary to the Treasury of the United States on the report of the Committee of Congress presented very recently on this important subject, from which it was evident that we had no hope of introducing our manufactures into the United States, unless we consented to take in exchange their corn. The Secretary to the United States Treasury says, "So long as the policy of other countries shall continue to exclude the products of our agriculture from their ports, and thus deny us the advantage of a fair reciprocity in trade, it would seem equally the dictate of policy and justice to our people to secure to them, as far as may be reasonably and properly done, a market for the consumption of their produce in their own country." It appeared, therefore, that while we refused to take their natural product—corn, the United States Government would continue to impose a duty on our manufactures. While we continued our system of prohibition they would continue their system of protection, and the only means to avoid this was to take from America a proper supply of their produce. They had heard during the last Session of Parliament, and since, of the great danger that had arisen to our manufactures from foreign competition, and he was sorry to find that these statements of our own manufacturers were confirmed by the observations of those foreign writers who were most familiar with commercial statistics. He could not conceive how the rivalry of continental nations and particularly of Germany (with whom we must be anxious more closely to draw our commercial connection), could be more increased than by the extension of the Germanic Confederation, which now spread itself over the whole of the north of Germany. That Confederation now included a population equal nearly to the population of our own country—both having a population of about 26,000,000 of inhabitants. While the lines of custom-houses had been abolished over this extent of Germany, the degree of competition against the manufactures of this country must be very considerably increased. He would shew that this was not a mere idle surmise. He would venture to read a short extract, founded on Prussian statistical returns, which was taken from a foreign writer, showing the effect which their system must have on the commerce of Great Britain. It was stated by this well informed writer, that since the confederacy had been formed, there had taken place an immense increase in the productions of cotton and other manufactures, of which other nations, and especially England, had previously furnished the principal part: so that Germany had not only become independent of England, but had been able to export a great proportion of her manufactured articles, and to compete with foreign nations. This was attested by statistical tables, which left them no doubt of the result. Now he had always considered this German Commercial Confederation, or Zollverein, as it was called, as an approximation to freedom of trade, just as the Union with Scotland, or as the abolition of the discriminating duties on corn between England and Ireland in the year 1806, was an approach to free trade between those countries; and he maintained that this approximation to free trade in Germany was only to be met by England by an approximation to free trade in general. And to show hon. Gentlemen opposite, who were so bent on the encouragement of our agriculture, what influence this increase of the manufactures of Germany had on the agriculture of the country, it was stated on the authority he had already quoted, that "the increase of trade in Germany, in consequence of this union, had considerably augmented the demand for the amount of the raw materials supplied by agriculture;" this allegation supported the doctrine which they (the Opposition Members) had always laid down on that side of the House, and which was not denied by the First Lord of the Treasury himself, that the real way to benefit agriculture was by extending trade and manufactures. The same authority which he had cited proceeded to show that this extension of the principles of free trade in Germany, so far from lowering wages, as some hon. Members on the other side of the House had apprehended, had had the effect of increasing wages; for the same writer observed, that "there had been, since that time, an increase of employment, and a rise in wages." He trusted, therefore, in common with many others who had, from the sincerest conviction maintained and supported the doctrine of free trade, that her Majesty's Government were about to act upon those principles as they were laid down by the committee on Import-duties, which sat during the last Parliament. He should, therefore, await the development of their plans with anxiety; he trusted he might do so with confidence. At the same time he was bound to express his sincere conviction, that although the present fluctuating scale of corn duties might be beneficially altered so as to make it a less sliding scale, yet it would be a sliding scale still; though altered in detail, it would have still the inherent defect of a bad principle; though it would reduce the amount of fluctuation, it would still fail to remove that real impediment to all increase of trade, unsteadiness of price and uncertainty of market. But if it should be the intention of her Majesty's Government to develope a more extensive measure than a mere alteration in the sliding scale, he should hail it with satisfaction, and assure them of his sincere support. He perhaps might be allowed to express his hopes that the right hon. Baronet would take his stand boldly and firmly upon what he really believed to be conducive to the permanent interest of the country, and that on this most vital question, he would not allow a desire of compromising and conciliating various interests to interfere with the exercise of his own sincere conviction, and his own independent reason. It had been his lot to come into Parliament when the right hon. Baronet was constrained to alter his course on the important subject of religious freedom. Up to that time the right hon. Baronet had maintained in debate, from conviction no doubt, the policy of a system of religious ascendency. He trusted that it would not be the course of the right hon. Baronet now to maintain a system of social ascendency, upholding one interest at the expense of another. Of such a policy if he did not become boldly the opponent, he would sooner or later be the victim.

Lord *J. Russell* spoke to the following effect: Mr. Speaker, I should have been glad if I could have given, with perfect satisfaction to myself, a silent vote in favour of the Address which has been proposed by the noble Lord opposite; but, as some misapprehension may exist, if some Member on this side of the House belonging to her Majesty's late Administration does not express his opinion with regard to certain points contained in that Address, I will venture to trouble the House with a few observations before we come to the vote which is to be given this night. I most heartily concur in the commencement of this Address, which proposes to assure her Majesty that we cordially join her Majesty in expressing our deep sense of gratitude to Almighty God on account of the birth of a Prince—an event which has added to the measure of her Majesty's domestic happiness, and which has been hailed with every demonstration of affectionate attachment to the Crown, by her Majesty's faithful and loyal people. Both on public and private grounds, as respects her Majesty's just and constitutional exercise of the privileges vested in her from the commencement of her reign to this day, as well as on account of the domestic happiness which she so well deserves. I fully and most fervently join in offering my congratulations upon the occurrence of an event which seems to contain in it the elements of public and private felicity. I cordially join, likewise, in that portion of the Address which expresses our joy and satisfaction at the visit of an illustrious prince,—an ally of her Majesty's house, who, at the invitation of her Majesty, has attended in person to be the sponsor of the Royal Prince whose christening has been lately celebrated, and I trust that with that Prince, eminent as he is, no less by his virtues and abilities than by the station which he holds among the powers of Europe, we shall continue a cordial and permanent alliance. Sir, with respect to other parts of the Address which relate to foreign powers, I find little to observe upon; and I can scarcely do more than express my concurrence in the sentiments declared by the noble Lord in moving the Address. I am rejoiced to hear, that our relations with Persia are not only re-established, but that a commercial treaty has been effected with that power; and I rejoice to learn, that with respect to all the powers of Europe, we are on terms of the most amicable nature. I trust, that any differences or causes of dissension, which may remain with regard to the United States of America may be satisfactorily arranged by the mission sent by the advice of her Majesty's present Government. Whether it were wise to send such a mission is a point on which I do not feel called upon now to give any opinion, nor do I feel it necessary to express any opinion whether it is better to arrange any existing points of difference by such means, or by means of the usual correspondents of her Majesty's Government. The Government have thought it best to adopt the course which they have taken, and I wish that it may be successful, and that with the United States, as well as with the powers of Europe, feelings may be established—feelings in common of the benefits of peace—feelings of the advantages of that commercial intercourse which strengthens and blesses peace; and that all causes of dissension, still less of war, all that spirit of hostility which has sometimes existed between nations, will be caused to vanish. Sir, I come now to that part of the Speech of her Majesty which concerns the domestic situation of this country; and I must say, with regard to that portion of the Speech, also, that I have very great satisfaction in observing the topics which are introduced into it, and adverted to, as well as in observing the manner in which they are referred to. It may be that when the measures are brought forward which are alluded to—that when the right hon. Baronet brings forward his measures with respect to corn—when other Members of the Government bring forward their measures with respect to the productions of foreign countries, they may not be such as I can support. But it is a satisfaction to me to find that the nature of the measures to which her Majesty, under the advice of the present advisers, has thought fit to call to the attention of Parliament, are of a nature similar to those which it was the crime of the late Government to bring under the consideration of Parliament. In our hands they were to be questions which would excite discord between one class and another—which would influence public discontent—which would injure the institutions of the country by unjust results, and which would lead to incalculable evils; but they are now to be submitted to the House as those questions upon which remedies for the financial difficulties of the country, and for the distresses of the people, may best be founded. The noble Lord who moved the Address, and who has done so in a manner which has given such promise of his future career in this House, thought proper to tell his constituents, before he became a Member of this House, that nothing could be worse than the conduct of the late Government, and he asked for their support on that ground, as well as upon the mode in which that Government proposed to treat the financial difficulties of the country. That Government was charged to be reckless for attempting to adopt such measures as were proposed; but now I am convinced that those measures were founded on right principles, and I am convinced by what has passed to-night, that the leaders of all parties who have considered this subject have come to the same opinion upon the principle upon which we should act; namely, that the disorder in our financial position is a matter which requires the attention of Parliament; that it should not be allowed to continue year after year without the attention of Parliament, at least; but that you should not attempt to set right the disorder of your finances, without at the same time taking into consideration the laws which affect trade—the laws which affect our imports—the laws which, to say in one word, impose such heavy taxes upon the people of this country—

not for the State—not for the Crown—not for the Exchequer—but for the sake of different classes. We brought these subjects under the consideration of the House. My right hon. Friend near me, the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, in stating the condition of the finances of the country to this House in April last, said, that we looked to such sources and to such things with a view to invigorate the resources of the country, to improve the general riches of the country, and thereby to improve our financial condition. Was he wrong, I ask, in stating those principles? Was the Cabinet, of which he was then the organ, mistaken in saying that those matters should be looked to? We have heard much of such things since the last Session of Parliament; and much has been said of remedies of totally different classes which have been suggested, and in accordance with many of which it has been represented that her Majesty's Ministers were disposed to act. There were, first, the delegates with respect to the Ten Hours' Factory Bill, and after their somewhat theatrical interview with the right hon. Baronet, and other Members of the Government, and a great deal of stage display, they thought fit to encourage the hope—no doubt raised first by the gentlemen who came to the Government in favour of the Ten Hours' Bill, and who turned out after all to be the Socialist editors of some new *Moral World*, that the attention of the Government would be given to the subject. But now it appears from a letter written some short time ago, to a noble Lord, who is most sincere, I believe, in his exertions on this point, that the right hon. Baronet, who I have no doubt is no less earnest, and is actuated by motives no less praiseworthy, but with more wisdom and caution, is ready to oppose the Ten Hours' Bill, and that limit of labour which, if adopted, would cut to the roots the manufacturing prosperity of this country, will not give his assent to such a measure. We next heard of a great scheme of emigration, which was to be the great remedy for all difficulties, by which the people of this country were to be transported to our colonies at the public expense; but now, by a letter written yesterday or the day before, by the noble Lord at the head of the Colonial Department, it appears that no such extensive scheme of emigration is entertained. The noble Lord seems now to contradict this suggestion; but, if such a scheme does exist, or is in contemplation, I have heard no notice given to-night of any intention to bring it under the attention of the House. If such a scheme is to be brought forward, I hope that the noble Lord will see that it is calculated to remedy the existing disorder of the finances before he proposes a wholesale scheme of emigration; but until I hear the notice given, I shall disbelieve that any such intention exists, or that, though it has been thrown out as a remedy proposed to be applied, there is any intention to bring forward a scheme which may lead us into fresh difficulties, and give rise to a new and extravagant expenditure. But another class of persons have predicted that, as a great portion of the party who have now come into power are opposed to the Poor-law, and that, as the Poor-law is tyrannical and oppressive, the Conservative Government (as it is called) will not be long before they propose a law, if not for the total repeal, for the abolition of the office of Commissioners, and everything that is odious in the existing law. We have had a practical denial of that by the appointment of a third gentleman to act as Commissioner — fully qualified to hold that office—and whose nomination to the performance of its duties does honour to her Majesty's Government, and to the Secretary of State for the Home Department. But such a circumstance is a complete refutation of any notion which may have been entertained that the Poor-law, as it now stands, is to be abolished or repealed. There have been other matters mentioned into which I will not further enter, to which the country have been prone to look during the recess as the remedies which the Government intended to propose, but I am glad to find, because I rejoice not less in the statement made in the Speech from the Throne than in the omissions which I observe in it, that none of these measures, some of which I should think most dangerous—almost all of which I should think most futile—are to be resorted to. But I am glad to find that the principles to be acted upon by the present Government, are no other than those wholesome ones proposed and advocated by theoretical writers for some time, supported by the best of statesmen in this country, and which the late Government, on their retirement from office, left as a legacy to the country, and which I hope to see eventually carried out; principles which before long I trust I shall see established on the statute-book of this country. The right hon. Baronet has already this evening given notice of his intention to bring forward the subject of the Corn-laws. Certainly, having that notice standing for a few days hence, I should think it most inopportune now to enter into any detail upon the subject, or even to discuss the principles of the question. But there is one thing which I beg to say, and that is, to entreat the Government, and the right hon. Baronet who is at the head of the Government, to consider the course which the discussions upon the Corn-laws have taken since I first gave notice, on the 30th of April last, of the intention of the Government, as it was then constituted, to propose some measures upon that point. I beg then to observe how little there has been advanced in favour of those views to which the right hon. Baronet then stated his adherence. I mean the principle of the sliding scale, and how much there has been stated, not by the adherents of this or that party, but by persons looking to the Corn-laws, and to the Corn-laws alone, as the object of their attention in favour of the principle which I then proposed, namely, that of a moderate fixed duty. I hope that before her Majesty's present Government propose their scheme, they will well consider what scheme they can propose which is likely to be enacted into a law with a prospect of endurance. I will readily yield to the right hon. Baronet, that if he proposes an alteration of the Corn-laws, with the support which he is likely to receive, he may find it no very difficult task to obtain the adoption of it by this and the other House of Parliament. But I beg him seriously to consider what the event would be, if the result of that enactment is, that no sooner has it received the royal assent, than the agitation against the Corn-laws should begin afresh—that the country and those who most consider the question should feel that a false and erroneous principle has been acted upon, and that it is necessary by petition or otherwise to secure a re-consideration of the subject. [*"Cheers and disapprobation."*] I heard a murmer, as if hon. Gentlemen opposite seemed to think that the passing of an Act of Parliament was quite sufficient to put an end to all discussion and discontent on the subject. But I beg them to believe, that that will not be the case; that great as the authority of Parliament may be, and I wish its authority to be great, still it will not supersede and override the conclusions which sensible and reflecting men draw from their own observation of the working of any particular law; and with respect to the farming interest, as well as with respect to every other interest, I believe that the greatest mischief would arise if after a new law was passed their feeling should be, that they could not make their bargains and agreements with their landlords or with other persons, with any confidence in the new law being likely to endure. If the right hon. Baronet has formed an opinion unfavourable to the principle of a fixed duty, he doubtless will not frame his scheme upon such a system; but, considering all that has been urged upon the question, and more especially in a very able pamphlet written by Mr. Hubbard, I trust that he will not propose a measure in which he has not himself the fullest confidence, and which he cannot feel is likely to remain on the statute book of the realm. I will not enter further into the subject, seeing that we shall shortly have an opportunity of discussing it fully; but I can only assure him in the words of Lord Melbourne, that that justice which was not done to Lord Melbourne's Government, we will endeavour to do to the Government which has followed it. If those measures which are now brought forward with respect to the import duties shall be found to be measures founded on right principles, and to which we can assent, we shall cordially give our support to them; if they are measures which we think should be amended, we shall most cordially and fairly endeavour to meet the exigency of the moment, and render them what they should be. With respect to one phrase in the speech of the noble Lord who moved the Address, which referred to the imposition of new taxes, I wish only to guard myself by saying that there is nothing in the Address which is now proposed which pledges the House of Commons to impose any new taxes. I think the words themselves which her Majesty has been advised to employ upon this point are extremely cautious. Her Majesty says

> "I rely with entire confidence on your disposition, while you enforce the principles of a wise economy, to make that provision for the service of the country which the public exigencies require. You will have seen with regret that, for several years past, the annual income has been inadequate to bear the public charges; and I feel confident that, fully sensible of the evil which must result from a continued deficiency of this nature during peace, you will carefully consider the best means of averting it."

These words, as I consider, agreeing with them as I am glad to do, leave to us the power of maintaining a principle, if we so think fit, which we maintained as a Government, that seeing that the expenditure of late years has been produced by temporary causes, and that it is a great and powerful evil to impose new taxes without an absolute necessity existing for us to do so, we should wait to ascertain the result of any measures which may be determined on, before we resort to the application of new imposts. I shall be ready to hear the statement of the right hon. Baronet, and which will, no doubt, extend to the whole course which he means to take, and certainly, if I am not able to support him in his plan, I will take care to give him due notice with respect to any point on which I may wish to take the sense of the House. I will only further say, that it is a great satisfaction to me that on the occasion on which we are to congratulate her Majesty on the auspicious birth of a Prince of Wales, there is nothing in the remainder of the Address which prevents me from giving my cordial assent to it; and whatever differences we may have hereafter—however I may dissent from the measures which may be hereafter brought forward—there is nothing which will prevent the House on this occasion from giving an unanimous vote.

Sir *Robert Peel* said: I cannot be surprised, though I am gratified to hear the noble Lord who has just sat down, express his feeling that we should unanimously concur, whatever may be our present divisions or our prospect of future conflicts, that we should cordially concur in presenting an Address to her Majesty, conveying to her Majesty the heart-felt congratulations of this House on the event which has recently occurred, and has given new stability to the Throne and constitution of this country. I have purposely abstained, with my colleagues, having long held that opinion, that there was great inconvenience in forcing the House, on the first day of its assembling, to a division, without the means which formerly existed of ascertaining the sentiments to be contained in the Address, from taking that course, and from calling on the House to pledge itself to the support of certain measures; and therefore, we did undoubtedly purposely frame the Address in a manner which we hoped would not unnecessarily produce a collision. We felt perfectly certain of the unanimous concurrence of the House in that part of the Address which congratulates her Majesty on a recent event; and we felt perfectly convinced that if that event has completed the domestic happiness of her Majesty and her illustrious consort, it has also added to the private and domestic happiness of every family in this country. The noble Lord has very lightly touched on those parts of the Address which referred to the foreign correspondence of this nation, and in all of them he expressed his readiness to concur; he expressed his satisfaction at the conclusion of a treaty with the court of Teheran, and at the prospect of the establishment of amicable relations between Persia and this country. I think that I should not refer to that subject without bearing my testimony to the cordial co-operation which the diplomatic agents of this country received from the minister of Russia in his exertions. But I am bound to say that I trust that it is the good sense of the court of Teheran, and the sense of the common interests involved in the question in dispute, which have induced that court to to accede to our advances and proffers, and that the establishment of our friendly interest is attributable to its own right and proper feeling. The Emperor of Russia, however, I must add, has exhibited every desire by means of his agent to influence the court of Teheran to re-establish its amicable relations with this country. The noble Lord, in his speech to the House, seemed to intimate some doubt upon the policy of sending a special mission to the United States of America, but he should bear in mind that some of the causes of difference between the United States and this country have long existed—that the attempts on the part of the various governments by means of correspondents, however ably they may have performed their duties, to bring them to a satisfactory conclusion, have been unsuccessful—that the continuance of these unfortunate causes of discord leads to fresh and increasing difficulties. These considerations it was which induced the Government, without implying the slightest censure on the very able Minister now in the United States, to send a person whose high station in the councils of this nation pointed him out as the fittest person to be selected, and who, possessed of the views and intentions of the Government, might go at once to the United States, and attempt by some other mode than that which had been hitherto resorted to, and which has not been successful, to effect that which would be a great object to attain for the interests of humanity and of civilization throughout the world, namely, the restoration of a perfectly friendly and cordial relation with the United States; or, I should rather say, the termination of the existing diffences. But if our friendly relations can be altogether re-established, I say, that it will not only be for the interest of the two countries, but for the general interests of humanity and the civilized world. Lord Ashburton, in undertaking the duty which has been imposed upon him, has been influenced by a sense of public duty, sacrificing his own feelings and views, but he shared in the feelings and views of the Government; and considering the position in which that noble Lord stands with regard to the United States, and the estimation in which his respected name is held there, we felt that no more welcome messenger than that noble Lord could be found. I am not aware of any other subjects connected with the foreign policy of the Government to which the noble Lord has adverted. He referred with some warmth to the plans of the Government for the relief of the domestic embarrassments of this country. He said, that he had heard various schemes suggested, and that he was pleased to find that no reference was made to any of them in her Majesty's Speech. He said, that a plan of general emigration had been spoken of, but that it appeared to have been put forth without any authority; but I think that the noble Lord might have gained sufficient experience in public affairs and in the conduct of a Government to know, that because measures are imputed to the executive Government, it does not, therefore, necessarily follow that they are in serious contemplation. The noble Lord, I think, will agree with me, that it is not because a paragraph appears in a newspaper imputing an intention to a Government, that, therefore, that intention should be denied, and I think he will not deny that such a course would be extremely inconvenient, because if adopted in one case, silence in another might appear to show acquiescence, and the executive Government would at length have little else to do than to contradict reports of their presumed intentions. The noble Lord, however, has referred to certain dramatic reports which have appeared of interviews which I had with some delegates on the part of the manufacturing population of this country. I confess that I am rather surprised that the noble Lord should speak with so much asperity of Socialist editors. The Government, undoubtedly through inadvertence, may have been deceived, but they did not at all events encourage those who came to them to expect the high honour of presentation to her Majesty. It is perfectly true, that I for one had an interview with a body of persons, who requested an interview, as a deputation from the manufacturing classes of the north. I do not know what course the noble Lord would have advised me to pursue. Would the noble Lord have thought it becoming in me to decline it until I had first ascertained the private characters and the political opinions of those who composed the deputation? I had no notice of those names, but even if I had, I should have received them without making the slightest inquiry as to the political opinions they professed. I saw the persons who called upon me, and who succeeded in deceiving me so far that on entering the room I believed them to be a deputation as represented—a belief which was strengthened by the perfect knowledge of the subject on which they came to speak—a knowledge which indicated a practical and daily connexion with the manufactures of the district from which they came. I conversed with them, but I am no party to the publication of what took place. They never consulted me as to whether or not the report was correct, and I must say I deprecate the publication of conversations with a Minister without first ascertaining from him whether he acquiesces in the accuracy of the report. Surprised as I was to find that a lengthened and detailed report of what passed had been published, I am innocent of any intention to derive an advantage from the dramatic effects of which the noble Lord spoke, and until I saw that these persons were editors of a newspaper, I remained under the pleasing delusion that I had been talking to workmen deputed by their brother workmen to give an account of their sufferings. With respect to the Poor-law, I think the apprehensions excited in the mind of the noble Lord by the declarations made in the newspapers might have been dispelled by the memory of the course taken by the Government during the last Session, and by the recollection of that which had so recently occurred in the House. I now approach that portion of the Address which involves subjects of the utmost consideration. I am sure the House will not expect me now to enter into any details with regard to those questions. The debate of this evening, the reading by the Speaker of her Majesty's Speech from the Throne, was preceded by an intimation given by me that I would on the first day that was consistent with the convenience of the Members of the House submit the views of her Majesty's Government on that important subject. I have given notice that I shall submit a motion on this subject; to any discussion of it, therefore, either directly or collaterally, on this occasion I am opposed, and I must postpone any further observation upon it till proper opportunity shall arise on my bringing forward the motion of which I have given notice. On behalf of my colleagues and myself, I may say, that we had hoped to have disclosed the whole of our financial and commercial policy together, and to have submitted at once to the House all the measures which we propose to take with reference to these subjects. I am precluded from doing so by considerations of public duty, although on the part of the Government, and as far as I and my colleagues are concerned, I am prepared to do so. When the House separated for the recess, and with the expectation that the recess would be long, I gave a pledge on the part of her Majesty's Government that the recess should be occupied in carefully reviewing all the great questions which then pressed for a thorough investigation. I undertook that all those great questions should have a full attention; I undertook that they should all undergo a careful review; I undertook also that after the recess no unnecessary delay should take place, but that her Majesty's Government would be prepared to explain their views, as well as the means to be adopted for the practical application of those views and of the principles on which they are founded, I gave that pledge. I now ask no further delay than is essentially necessary to enable us to bring forward our measures in the mode laid down by the forms of this House. I propose to submit the financial measures of her Majesty's Government as soon as the votes of supply can be taken in committee of supply so as to enable us to proceed in committee of Ways and Means, when we shall fully discuss the whole subject. I do not then ask for delay; I do not intend to postpone the announcement of the budget, as it is called, to that period of the year at which it is usually brought forward. Indeed, so far as concerned the convenience of her Majesty's Government, we are prepared to state to the House now the measures with reference to the commerce and finance of the country which we mean to propose; and, as I have said, I should have wished to state the nature of those measures simultaneously with the views which we have arrived at on the subject of the Corn-laws; but I think that there would be disadvantage to the public interests in postponing the consideration of the Corn-laws, and that it would be better that her Majesty's Government should propose to the House their views relative to those laws on Wednesday next, and postpone the remainder of the financial and commercial policy until the House is prepared to vote the usual provision for the service of the year, in Committee of Ways and Means. There certainly would have been considerable advantage in her Majesty's Government having the power of disclosing the whole of their policy at once. That advanage, therefore, I must forego; and, as I have said, I shall next week move, as I have given notice, on the subject of the Corn-laws. As soon also as I have obtained some votes in Committee of Supply, I will on the earliest possible day state the views of the government as to the financial situation of the country. I trust that the House will approve of the fairness of the course which I have adopted on the part of my colleagues and myself in redemption of the pledge which I gave on the separation of the House last Session. We have carefully considered the state of the country, and we have instituted such inquiries as we thought necessary for the purpose of obtaining information; and we are now prepared to submit to the House such measures as we think that the interests of the country require. They shall be submitted to the House as it requisite as regards the responsibility of the Government for them. Looking, then, at the various complicated interests of the country, and the difficulties attending our financial situation, we are prepared to state that these are the measures which, to the best of our judgment, we thought ought to be adopted, and it will be for the House of Commons to determine, when they hear our statements, whether its views concur with ours, and whether it is prepared to ratify these measures, or to adopt other measures for the relief of the country from its present difficulties, and for the promotion of industry and commerce, submitted to it by those who differ with us as to the view of the state of affairs.

Mr. *Villiers* said, that he did not rise to dissent from the liberal generalities that they had heard that evening, for he shared in the general satisfaction at the promises contained, or perhaps the admissions implied, in the Speech. Indeed, a greater discouragement to those who pinned their faith on the promises of monopoly, or a more auspicious sign for those who were struggling for freedom, could hardly have been given—and he, for one, heartily rejoiced to see that, notwithstanding the vast influence which the landed proprietary possessed and exercised, socially and politically, there was a power beyond them in the general opinion of the country, that they dared not resist. And though for some years past they seemed to be indifferent to the mischiefs of their law, yet when the evils of this law met with general detection, they wisely shrank from maintaining it. He would not, however, dilate on the subject at this moment, against the wish of the House; he chiefly rose to add the expression of his hope to that of the noble Lord's, that the right hon. Baronet, whom the landed proprietors appear now to have invested with complete power to do what he deemed right, would seriously consider in what way he could deal with the Corn-law, with the view to its permanent settlement—and for this purpose, he hoped he would well weigh what had been the effect of so long deferring the settlement of this question. The noble Lord had said truly, that the present system was quite discredited among all who desired any change; and it was also true what the noble Lord said, that there was a party in the country who do not desire to see the present law commuted for a fixed duty, but that party was larger when the noble Lord proposed his plan than what it was now—and what he wished the right hon. Baronet to consider was, whether the public mind had not now undergone a great change as to the principle or policy of imposing a tax at all on the food of the people—and whether, by dint of distress and discussion during the last five months, there was not more unanimity now against the propriety of taxing the food of the community, than the most sanguine could have expected—and whether any settlement could be deemed satisfactory short of leaving the trade in food free? He firmly believed, that during the last year, the folly, the cruelty—he could almost say the crime—of this law, had been generally detected, and would not much longer be endured—and he believed that the wishes of thousands, nay, millions, would not be consulted, if the earliest convenient opportunity was not taken of bringing the whole question of the imposition of any tax upon the daily food of the people before the House, and this he now gave notice he should do.

Mr. *Escott* said, he thought that the agriculturists of this country were placed in a most extraordinary position, and he must say, he hoped that, as the noble Lord had said, Parliament would produce such a measure as would settle this great question, but that the measure would not be framed with reference to agitation, either to raise or put it down, but with a view to the interests of all. The agriculturists knew that they had just suffered a great loss in the Queen's Council, which they greatly deplored. The Duke of Buckingham was one who for many a long year the agriculturists of England had been accustomed to look up to as their champion, defender, and friend. They knew also that they had lost his services at the very moment when other classes were clamorous, or said to be clamorous for a total abolition of the Corn-laws, which the noble Lord always supported. Well, feeling all this, they were not averse generally to changing the system of these laws. [*Cheers.*] That remark might be cheered by hon. Gentlemen opposite; but he was certain that any man acquainted with what was the feeling of the agriculturists would say that they were not averse to a change. They knew the wisdom of making a change in the present system; in short, all they now sought was to be relieved from the anxiety and uncertainty which they had suffered so long; and he, for one, thanked the right hon. Baronet for having appointed an early day for taking this subject into consideration, as for a happy relief from the distress and uncertainty with which they were at the present moment undoubtedly oppressed.

Motion for presenting an Address agreed to *nem. con.* and a Committee appointed to prepare and draw up the same.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, February 4, 1842.

MINUTES.] Several Lords took the Oaths.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, February 4, 1842.

MINUTES.] New Member. Hon. C. Hope, for Linlithgowshire.

Petitions presented, By Sir William Somerville, from Drogheda, for the better regulation of the Butter-trade.—By Dr. Bowring, from Kilmarnock, and other places, by Mr. M. Phillips, from Churchtown, and other places in Lancashire, by Mr. Beckett, from Leeds, and other places, and by Mr. Strutt, from Derby, and other places, for the Repeal of the Corn-laws.—By Dr. Bowring, from Kilmarnock, for Universal Suffrage.—By Captain de Rous, from St. Margaret's, Westminster, for Church Extension.—By Mr. H. Drummond, from Eddrachills, for the Abolition of Church Patronage in Scotland.

MARRIAGE LAW (IRELAND).] Mr. *O'Connell* said, he was greatly surprised at a decision which had lately taken place in Ireland, relative to the validity of marriages solemnised by Dissenting ministers, between Dissenters and members of the Established Church. That decision had an evident tendency to unhinge society, and to produce effects of the most immoral character. It was calculated to induce individuals who came within the scope of that decision to believe that they had a right to leave their wives and families, and to marry again. He wished, therefore, to know whether it were the intention of Her Majesty's Government to introduce a bill for the purpose of legalizing such marriages as had already taken place, and for the purpose of settling this question in future.

Sir *R. Peel* wished to state, in answer to the question of the right hon. the Lord Mayor of Dublin, that the subject to which he referred had been under the consideration of Her Majesty's Government for some time, and that it was their intention to introduce a bill for the purpose of establishing the validity of such marriages without delay, so as to meet those cases which he so much regretted to have occurred, where persons who for years had considered themselves in the full exercise of legitimate rights suddenly found that they were liable to be deprived of them in consequence of a decision of the courts of law. He thought it necessary that something should be done for the settlement of the general question. It was, however, a very important subject, and the nature of the remedy that ought to be applied to it required the most serious consideration. At as early a period as possible a bill would be brought in for the purpose of regulating the whole subject. The attention of the Government had been of late absorbed by many other important questions, and all that they now proposed to do was to supply a remedy to the immediate evil, and to take time to consider what would be the best means of dealing hereafter with the whole question.

CHURCH-RATES.] Sir *J. Easthope* said, as an allusion had been made in the Speech from the Throne as to the intention of introducing a measure relative to the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts, he wished to ask the right hon. Baronet opposite whether that notice pointed to any proposition which would include a settlement of the question of compulsory Church-rates, or whether any measure, having that object in view, was contemplated by Her Majesty's Government?

Sir *R. Peel* said, that any bill introduced on the subject referred to in the Speech would be exclusively confined to the amendment of the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts. The subject was noticed agreeably to the recommendation of commissioners appointed some years ago to inquire into the jurisdiction of these courts; and any bill that would be brought forward on that subject would not contain any provision as to church-rates.

Sir *J. Easthope:* Will the right hon. Baronet permit me to ask whether it is in the contemplation of Government to propose any measure respecting Church-rates in the present Session of Parliament?

Sir *R. Peel:* It is not in the contemplation of Government to propose any such measure.

Mr. *Hawes* said, that as in the report alluded to another mode of collecting Church-rates was recommended, he should be glad to know whether her Majesty's Government were influenced in their determination as to what should be done by any suggestion contained in that report?

Sir *R. Peel* said, he had already given an answer on the subject, and the hon. Member would, he trusted, see how very inconvenient it would be to enter into any discussion when the question was not before the House.

Bribery at Elections.] Mr. *T. Duncombe* begged leave to ask whether it was the intentions of Government to introduce any measure for the purpose of putting an end to that wholesale system of bribery to which he believed a vast majority of the Members of that House were at present indebted for their seats? During the last Session the right hon. Baronet had intimated an intention of bringing in a measure of that nature, unless the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) who was then in office should follow up his expressed determination to introduce a bill on that subject. He now understood that it was not the noble Lord's intention to introduce any measure of that nature, and therefore he was anxious to know, as the bribery was admitted, whether Government intended to bring in any bill of the description to which the right hon. Baronet had formerly alluded?

Sir *R. Peel* said, he had not the advantage of communicating with the noble Lord, so as to learn what were the intentions of the noble Lord with respect to the contemplated bill to which the hon. Gentleman alluded. He was therefore taken by surprise when the hon. Member intimated that it was the intention of the noble Lord to abandon that object. He, however, thought that it would be more convenient that those great measures, the Corn-laws, and others that were intimately connected with the financial and commercial policy of the country, should be first brought under the consideration of the House. They were at present of awful importance, and were likely to occupy much of the attention of the House. He, therefore, did not wish to distract that attention by putting notices of motion on the paper, which might be put off from night to night, and never come on for discussion. Such a proceeding could only have the effect of impeding the effectual consideration of questions in the contemplation of which the public mind was at present almost wholly absorbed. He hoped, therefore, that the House would excuse him if he directed its attention, in the first instance, to measures which were admitted on all hands to be of the utmost importance.

Corn-Laws — Ministerial Plan.] Lord *J. Russell* wished to know from the right hon. Baronet what course he intended to pursue with respect to the Corn-law question. He understood that, on Wednesday next, the right hon. Baronet intended to move a committee of the whole House to consider the duty on the importation of foreign corn. It had been the usual course for several years, when a question of great magnitude like the present was brought forward, for the Member who introduced it to state his plan, perhaps to bring forward some resolutions, to move that they be printed, and then to name a day, when the House having had an opportunity of considering them should deliberate and decide on the subject. Did the right hon. Baronet mean to pursue that course? And if he did, had he fixed a day on which he proposed, after having made his motion on Wednesday, to proceed with the actual discussion of the question?

Sir *R. Peel* said, that so far as he was concerned, and so far as the convenience of the Government was concerned, he should be perfectly prepared to proceed with the discussion of the question on Wednesday. He thought it very probable that if he asked for a vote on resolutions proposed for the first time it would be objected to, and very reasonably, because the House must know that such a proceeding would circumscribe its powers hereafter, since it could not alter a scale of duties when it had once been determined on in committee. He should, then, adopt the course that seemed to him to be best suited to the convenience of the House—namely, to bring forward the proposition of the Government on Wednesday next; then to move that the proposition and its details should be printed *pro forma*, and then to fix an early day, either Friday or Monday at furthest. He was prepared for Friday, but perhaps it would be more convenient that Monday should be named for proceeding with the discussion. Perhaps the House would wish for some delay, in order to consider more deliberately this plan of revision of duties. Therefore, if Friday should seem inconveniently soon, let it be understood, that on Wednesday he would propose his plan of revision, and move the printing of the papers, and that on Monday they should resume the discussion. Perhaps this would be the best course, and he was quite ready to adopt it.

Lord *J. Russell* said the proposition of the right hon. Baronet was perfectly fair and proper. It was, therefore, most desirable, that it should be distinctly understood, that the discussion of the question would be proceeded with on Monday, for it would be too soon, if the plan were introduced on Wednesday, to proceed with the debate on the Friday following. Let, therefore, hon. Members bear in mind, that the plan would be opened on Wednesdy next, and that it would be formally discussed on the Monday following.

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO THE SPEECH.] The Earl of *March* brought up the report on the Address in Answer to her Majesty's Speech.

On the motion that it be agreed to,

Mr. *O'Connell* said, he did not mean to detain the House for many minutes, nor did he rise for the purpose of exciting any difference of opinion on the reception of the report. The Speech from the Throne was itself sufficiently comprehensive to insure his concurrence to a considerable extent. He would not anticipate any of the topics contained in it, but would " bide his time " until Wednesday next, when they would be put in possession of the plan contemplated by her Majesty's Ministers. Indeed, he would not have addressed the House at all if he had not found one paragraph in the Speech, and in the Address, which gave him some alarm. He alluded to that paragraph which related to the registration of voters, which seemed to him to be brought in with some very strong design, otherwise he did not know how that subject could have found its way into a speech which the right hon. Baronet had himself characterized as relating to matters of awful importance in the present state of the country. The introduction of that topic created an alarm which he should not have felt had it appeared in a speech that was not said to involve matters of such high importance. He was sorry to perceive that there was no allusion made to any intention of facilitating in the way in which, in his judgment, it ought to be facilitated, the system of registering voters, either by defining the nature of the franchise, when it was doubtful, or by making it co-extensive in both countries. Either the one or the other of those plans would be quite consistent with the finality of the Reform Bill, which, he presumed, was the doctrine of the right hon. Baronet and his Government. To equalize the franchise in the two countries would be quite consistent with the Reform Bill—to define it, when it was doubtful, would also be quite consistent with the bill. So that, without violating their principles, either mode of relief might be adopted by the Government. But, finding this phrase single and by itself, without allusion to any of the means by which a salutary registration might be effected, he could no but view it with considerable apprehension. He was sorry to say, that no period of history had ever occurred in which, when the Tory party had the power to diminish the rights of the Irish people, they had not availed themselves of it. They had the power now—whether they would so avail themselves of it the country would speedily see. This might be the subject of angry discussion hereafter, and he would say nothing more on the subject. With every other part of the Address he cordially agreed.

Address agreed to; to be presented to her Majesty at one o'clock on the following day.

ADDRESS TO PRINCE ALBERT.] Sir *R. Peel* said, he had now to propose to the House another address, in which he was sure that every Member present would most cordially join. It was an address of congratulation to his Royal Highness Prince Albert upon the auspicious event of the birth of a Prince of Wales. He felt assured, that that illustrious Prince had, by the course which he had pursued since he became connected with this country, entitled himself to, and obtained, the general, the universal respect of every Englishman. He felt, therefore, no doubt, that the House would adopt the address of congratulation which he now proposed to his Royal Highness with the same unanimity that had marked their acquiescence in the address to her Majesty. The right hon. Baronet moved, "That a congratulatory message be sent to his Royal Highness Prince Albert, on the happy occasion of the birth of a Prince, the Heir Apparent to the Throne."

"To assure his Royal Highness that we cordially rejoice in an event so calculated to increase the domestic happiness of Her Majesty and of his Royal Highness, and to maintain the best interests of the country, by continuing the succession to the Throne in a Prince whose mind and dispositions will be formed under the instructions and example of his illustrious parents."

Lord *John Russell* begged to express his entire concurrence in the sentiments uttered by the right hon. Baronet, and he had great pleasure in seconding the adoption of the Address.

Address agreed to *nem. con.* To be presented to his Royal Highness at 1 o'clock on the following day.

APPROPRIATION OF THE SUPPLIES 1841.] The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that there having been two Sessions of Parliament in the course of the year 1841, the Ways and Means for that year were voted by two separate acts. In the titles of those acts the sums were stated to be voted for the service of the year 1841, but in the bodies of the acts the Ways and Means were applied to the public service during the particular Session in which each respective bill was passed. There was a surplus of the vote in the first Session; but in consequence of the circumstance to which he had referred, that surplus could not be devoted to the services of the second Session. The consequence was, that it became necessary to apply different sums to different parts of the same services, and this gave rise not only to great inconvenience in the public department, but some loss to the public revenue; for as those votes that were agreed to in the first Session could not be made applicable to the second Session, it was impossible that the Exchequer bills reserved for those services could be paid off with the rapidity that was desirable. With regard to the bill which he now asked leave to introduce, he was only following the precedent which had been set in the year 1831. He therefore moved for leave to introduce a bill for the application to the service of the year 1841 of the sums granted in either of the two last Sessions of Parliament.

Mr. *F. T. Baring* said, that as he understood the right hon. Gentleman he only intended to do now what, if it had been proposed in the last Session of Parliament, would not have given rise to the least objection. But perhaps the right hon. Gentleman would permit him to ask a question with regard to the financial proposal of the last Session, whether consistently with the interest of the public service he would be able shortly to lay upon the table of the House a return, showing how that financial measure had terminated? He would not ask for the information, if it would cause any difficulty to the public service.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* would take an early opportunity of giving the information required, and at any rate, would promise to produce it before he attempted to propose any new measure.

Leave given, bill brought in and read a first time.

EMIGRATION—SALE OF COLONIAL LANDS —PASSENGERS' ACT.] Lord *Stanley* said, that although on the part of her Majesty's Government he had given no sanction to the reports which had been alluded to last night by the noble Lord who had preceded him in the Colonial Department, of an extensive scheme of emigration, with regard to which he had received various suggestions of an extensive and important character, yet the House would think that he was only discharging his duty to the public in the situation he filled, if he took the earliest opportunity afforded to him in the present Session of Parliament of directing the attention of the House to two questions of the utmost importance to the emigrants, who were, year by year, without any interference on the part of the Government, proceeding to other countries, relieving the mother country of a portion of its surplus population, and going to other countries to augment the resources of the colonies, as well as of the mother country itself. He thought that he could not better promote the interests of the two classes of emigrants—one of which consisted of the poorer classes, and the other of those who were more wealthy, and were capable of purchasing land—than in the two subjects which he was about to bring under the consideration of the House, with the view of introducing useful legislation. One of those subjects was the means of affording better security to the poorer emigrants against the frauds that were practised upon them, and to ensure convenience for their passage; and the other was to remedy the inconvenience sustained by the purchasers of lands by the constantly fluctuating systems pursued as to the sale of land, in Australia particularly, and by the different systems found in different colonies. With regard to the first subject, the House was hardly, and he was sure that the country was not aware of the extent to which emigration had gone without any assistance or direct encouragement from the Government. And here he must say, that most of the persons who had, from the most benevolent motives, advocated an extensive system of colonization, had overlooked many natural circumstances affecting the vital interests of parties by whom the benefits were intended to be received. He had not seen one scheme which would not be a great burthen to the country, and which would not, however benevolently intended, fail in advancing the permanent interests of the parties emigrating. He had before him a return of the amount of emigration from the United Kingdom, without any assistance from the public funds or the Government of this country. It appeared from this return that during the last five years, the average number of persons who had emigrated on their own account, except in the year 1838, when from the peculiar circumstances affecting the North American colonies emigration to Canada had stopped for a time, was from 75,000 to 80,000 a year; that in the year 1840, the number of persons thus emigrating had reached to 90,700; and that in the first three quarters of the year 1841, the total amount of emigration was 106,475 persons. It might be, and it was, wise to attempt to assume the direction of the manner in which this emigration should be conducted; but to attempt to force it beyond the amount it had already reached, was at once impolitic and injurious to the very parties whom they desired to serve. At one time, indeed, it had been the opinion of the House that the legislature ought to leave the carrying trade of passengers untouched, as other matters of ordinary business; it was thought that the emigrants would readily take care of themselves, and that any regulations which might be adopted, would only impose additional cost upon them. It was, therefore thought impolitic to interfere, and that the emigrant agents would soon discover at what cost, and under what condition emigrants could be carried. A Passengers' Act, of some sort or another, had been in existence for many years, and the whole were consolidated in the year 1825. In the year 1827, however, the committee upon emigration had recommended that the Passengers' Act should be repealed; but, as soon as it was repealed, and the emigration agents were wholly freed from control, the frauds became so numerous, the abuses were so outrageous, that the complaints were general, and the clamours were so loud, that six months after the former act was repealed, it became unavoidably necessary to pass a new act containing provisions of still greater stringency. Since that period a Passengers' Act, modified and altered from time to time, had continued in operation. In the year 1833, when he last held the office lately filled by the noble Lord opposite (Lord John Russell), he had introduced a system founded upon a different principle. Emigration agents were appointed at various ports to assist the persons about to emigrate, and to check the frauds practised upon them, and notwithstanding the difficulties they had to encounter. he believed that the emigration agents had materially checked the abuses that formerly existed, and had been of considerable advantage to the poorer classes of emigrants. They had now, therefore, to legislate upon the experience of eight or nine years, and upon the reports of the emigration agents themselves. They had examined the existing system, and had reported upon its defects, and on the principal modes by which their utmost diligence was evaded. Their report had been laid before the noble Lord, who preceded him in July last; and they had since reported more fully, had given much additional information, and had accompanied their report with several useful recommendations. The alterations which he was about to propose were wholly matters of detail, and the House would abstain from pressing him then to state minutely what the alteration he proposed was, and the more so, because the course which he intended to pursue was one which would best suit the convenience of the House, and because he was desirous that the bill should pass, after mature discussion, but without any opposition from either side, for the emigration for the year usually commenced in March, and if the measure was to be of service to the emigrants, it must be passed at the earliest moment. The course which he intended to pursue was, to lay upon the Table of the House the two reports from the land and emigration agents, and with them all the amendments, clause by clause, which he intended to make in the present act, and the specific provisions he proposed to introduce. Such hon. Gentlemen as were disposed to give their consideration to the question, would thus have an opportunity of reading all the information laid upon the Table, before they came to their conclusions, and would be able more conveniently to discuss the various details. He proposed also, to make some alteration in the existing law, so far as it applied to the different regulations, as to the space required for passengers, and the quantity of provisions and of water, which would be settled according to the length of the voyage. The same regulations would not, of course, apply to different climates, and to voyages of different lengths. Thus a larger space for each passenger, and more water would be required when the vessel was on a long voyage, and entering a tropical climate, than for a shorter passage in a more temperate climate. As the present Passengers' Act applied only to emigration from the United Kingdom, and as there had been a bill passed embodying many of the provisions for short passages in the West Indies, he intended to incorporate the two acts into one, and to make them apply, not only to passengers leaving the United Kingdom, but also to inter-colonial passengers, and to short voyages. As the notice which he had given was for two bills which were connected together, and were bills of the same class, he might take that opportunity of stating his views with respect to the second bill for regulating the sale of lands in the Australian colonies. He confined the bill to the Australian colonies for this reason, that her Majesty's Government had a much more efficient and direct control over the legislation of those colonies, and over the disposal of the land fund there, than over those colonies to which they had given a separate legislature, and which could not be dealt with in the same manner as the Australian colonies. With regard to the West Indian colonies, it was unnecessary to legislate for them now, and at any rate, it would be improper to legislate for them in the present bill, because no great amount of emigration had set in between this country and the West Indies, owing to the difference in the climate, which was so uncongenial to British constitutions; whereas the Australian colonies required legislation because they now attracted a great portion of the tide of emigration. The amount of emigration to those colonies had been from year to year increasing, and in the land fund up to the last year, there had been a proportionate increase. The returns from the colonies were also increasing in a very satisfactory degree. He thought it would be gratifying to read to the House a statement of a few figures, showing the amount of the imports and exports from one of the Australian colonies within the last few years, and he would confine himself to New South Wales. The exports from New South Wales in the year 1835, amounted to 682,000*l.*, and in 1840 they had increased from 682,000*l.* to 1,251,000*l.* The imports to the colony, more than two-thirds of which were of British manufacture, amounted in the year 1835 to 707,000*l.*, and had increased in 1840 to 2,600,000*l.* In 1830, the exports from New South Wales, in the article of wool, amounted to 900,000 pounds weight, and in the year 1836, that article of export from that colony, and of import to this country, had arisen from 900,000 pounds weight to 3,611,000 pounds weight; and in 1840 to 7,668,000 pounds weight. He had only trespassed on the patience of the House, in order to point out the great and growing importance of those colonies, and to show, that in their legislation they should proceed on sound data in a matter relating not only to the comfort of the parties emigrating, but for the interests of the mother country itself. The system under which land had been disposed of in the Australian colonies had varied almost from year to year, and these alterations had created considerable and just disappointment to persons going out under one set of regulations, and discovering, on their arrival in the colony, that another system, and a different set of regulations were in force. These changes had not only occasioned great disappointment, but they had led to disputed titles, and to great litigation, whilst they had checked emigration, and prevented the application of capital to the colonies; for, large as had been the increase in the number of emigrants of late years, he firmly believed, that that increase would have been still greater, had it not been for the tendency of these constantly changing schemes to check it, and particularly among the most valuable class of emigrants. He would only take the case of New South Wales; but the description would apply to other colonies. It was a system of perpetual change. In the year 1827, a set of regulations had been promulgated, relative to the granting of land, laying down certain conditions, a compliance with which would entitle the emigrant to a grant of land. These regulations had not, he believed, been confirmed, and were not promulgated from authority by the Government; but many persons had gone out, expecting, on their arrival in the colony, to find those regulations in force. In 1828 these regulations were changed, and grants of land were made, upon a principle different to that which had been acted on in 1827. In, however, 1831, his noble Friend, Lord Ripon, with the assistance of another noble Friend of his (Lord Howick), who was not then present, had, much to their own credit, and to the advantage of the colony, introduced a principle, substituting the sale for the grant of land. That principle had at first been extremely objected to by the inhabitants of the colony, but the result of that plan had been, that whereas, in the year 1830, the amount arising from the sale of lands did not exceed 18,096*l.*, it had successively risen in different years to 30,000*l.*, 89,000*l.*, 108,000*l.*, 114,000*l.*, 127,000*l.*, 160,000*l.*, until in 1840 it had reached 339,738*l.* He thought it right to state, and he regretted that in consequence of various circumstances that amount during the past year had been considerably diminished, and in 1841 he did not expect that the sum realized would much exceed 160,000*l.* In the year 1831, however, the principle of the sale of lands had been first introduced. In 1838, the price of land had been altered, having been raised from 5*s.* to 12*s.* an acre. But in October, 1840, a new method of disposing of land had been introduced into New South Wales. Instead of making the sales by auction, and naming a minimum upset price, a fixed price of 1*l.* per acre had been established, and this mode of disposing of lands had been scarcely a year in existence when another change was made; and, in consequence of the representations of the colonists and the report of a committee of that House, in August, 1841, the Colonial Office had gone back to the system which had been abandoned in the previous year. He did not say that these alterations had been made without good and valid reason, but he could not see why any Secretary of State or successive secretaries should have it in their power to make those changes of their own authority, clearly without the control, and almost without the knowledge, of Parliament; and he thought it was not right that any Secretary of State should possess the power of making these changes without authority, and without taking those means to give them publicity, without which it was impossible to obtain the confidence of the public mind in their stability. What he meant to propose was, to divest the Secretary of State of that responsibility and that undue power. He proposed to introduce a bill which would regulate the principles and the provisions by which land should be sold in Australia. He had great objection to having the principle and the system different in the various colonies. He saw no reason that the principle of sale by auction should exist in one colony, and that a fixed price should prevail in another. He saw no reason why Port Philip should have one system, Sydney another—why Western Australia should differ in that respect from South Australia, and New Zealand from all. He proposed to apply the same system by Act of Parliament to all the colonies, and he would state as shortly as possible that system, because, whether the details of his plan on this subject should be agreed to by the House or not, they would not be supposed to refuse him permission to introduce a bill upon the subject. The system he meant to introduce to their attention was neither absolute sale by auction, nor a sale by a fixed price, but it was a system founded on a principle recommended by a committee, which investigated last year the affairs of South Australia. It was proposed that the separate colonies should be surveyed in districts, and that certain portions of the land should be regularly brought into the market; that there should be one regulated upset price, below which no land should be sold, and at which there should be a permanent sale: that the land surveyed should be divided into three classes, —viz., that reserved for the site of towns, that which, from its peculiar situation in the immediate neighbourhood of towns, acquired an artificial value; and thirdly, the outlying or country lots. As to the two first classes, they should never be sold except by auction at the periodical sales; and with regard to the third or the ordinary country lots, not sold when put up to auction, the land should not again be put up, but that remaining unsold should be liable to be sold in the interval at the upset price; if the upset price had not been bid at the sale, and at a price bearing some reference to the value of the lands, when the upset price had been bid at the sale, but the purchase had not been completed. For it frequently happened that forfeitures took place by persons bidding for land and paying the first instalment alone. It sometimes occurred, that land in the colonies was bid for by particular persons, who being desirous of keeping other persons away, found it worth their while to sacrifice the small deposit paid at the sale, and never to complete the purchase, and thus prevent any person from buying the land in the interval between the sales. This system he proposed to check. He proposed to establish a fixed upset price, and to subject the land to periodical sales, allowing such as was not bid for to be purchased in the interval between the sales at the upset price. The consequence of this would be, that the more valuable land would sell at the larger price, and the inferior land would sell at the minimum price; but those persons who were content to take inferior lands, rather than wait for the periodical sales, would have the chance of taking inferior land, and settling themselves upon it, without the delay of waiting. He knew that this was a question into which many persons had not enquired, and he would not weary the House by entering into all the details of the measure. The bill was applicable to the whole of the Australian colonies, and it embodied, with some modifications, the whole of the recommendations of the South Australian Committee of last year. Although he proposed to give a discretionary power to the governor to fix the upset price, yet when that was once fixed, there should be no power in the governor to lower it, or after her Majesty in council had fixed a price, that there should be no power to lower it, although it might be raised, except by an Act of Parliament; and he did this for the purpose of preventing injury to persons who had purchased land in the colonies upon the faith of a minimum price. He proposed also to give a power to the Queen in council to fix the price of land at not less than a limited amount, and he proposed to give to the governor of the colony a discretionary power, in certain districts, of raising from time to time the price fixed by the Queen in council, but with their sanction; and after the Queen in council had sanctioned the increased price, no authority less than that of the House of Commons would be able to diminish it. With respect to the proceeds of the sales, he knew that there were many gentlemen who contended that they should be entirely applied to the purposes of emigration. He was not prepared to go that length. He did not think this a desirable step to take. He was quite satisfied that, in many cases, it would be very inconvenient if a positive rule were laid down that the whole of the proceeds of the land sales should be applied to the purposes of emigration. Emigration, important as it was, was not the only purpose to which the land funds might be legitimately applied. He thought that the proceeds of the sales might be applied to the expenses of the survey. It should be recollected, that they were not dealing with an uninhabited country, but that the aborigines had claims upon their justice and humanity. For the purpose of affording them relief, part of the sales should be applied. To hardships they must be subject wherever white and civilized man came into contact with uncivilized uneducated aboriginal inhabitants. They might remedy this inconvenience, but they were bound to set aside a portion of the proceeds for humanising, instructing, and providing for the aboriginal inhabitants. It did not seem unreasonable to devote a part for the internal improvement of the colonies—the expenses for roads and other communications—which fell heavily upon the colonies. The proposed enactment, it would be observed, was giving up a large portion of the exclusive rights of the Crown. With the consent of the Crown, therefore, he would enact that one-half of the land sales should be applicable to the purpose of emigration, and as much more in each case as the authorities may think fit, after deductions, for the purpose to which he had alluded. He believed it would be necessary to limit the duration of the act to the life of her present Majesty. He believed that neither Parliament nor her Majesty could dispose of the hereditary revenue beyond the life of the Sovereign. At all events, there being doubts on this question—and, indeed, there were more than doubts—there could be no objection to the provision which he proposed, limiting the duration of the act to the life of the Sovereign. With these observations, and thanking the House for the attention they had given him on the dry details of this subject, he now moved for leave to bring in a bill to regulate the laws relating to the carriage of passengers in merchant vessels; and also a bill to regulate the sale of lands in the Australian colonies.

Mr. *Hindley* inquired whether the Bill was to have a retrospective effect, and apply to sums of money already received for the sale of lands?

Lord *Stanley:* The Bill would apply to the money that was to be realized; certainly not to that which had been already spent.

Lord *John Russell* had listened with great interest to the statement of the noble Lord. At present he did not think it necessary to enter into the details of the measure; but he was very happy to say that in all its general principles he perfectly concurred. With respect to the first question on which his noble Friend addressed the House—the policy of not attempting any great systematic plan of emigration on the part of the Government, he entirely agreed in the observations that had been made. The statement quoted by the noble Lord himself, which showed that under the present voluntary system, 106,000 persons had emigrated in the course of one year—for it was nearly a whole year for the purposes of emigration—was sufficient to induce Parliament not only to hesitate, but positively to refuse its assent to any new mode of forced Government emigration. With respect to the mode in which the present system of emigration was carried on, he must admit that, notwithstanding the regulations sanctioned by Parliament, he had received reports showing that many abuses still existed. There were frequently cases where poor Irish emigrants did not supply themselves with more food than would suffice for the shortest voyage, and in case of any accident, if the ship were delayed in port, or had a long and tempestuous voyage, suffered the greatest privations. He regretted that he had been obliged to admit the existence of many evils of this kind when he held the office now filled by the noble Lord, and, so far from objecting, he would be glad to see any proposal introduced for the remedy of this subject. With respect to the other bill which the noble Lord had proposed to introduce, the noble Lord stated, he believed correctly, the various modes by which regulations had been made from time to time; first, for the grant; and, secondly, for the sale of lands. A great alteration was made in these respects, in the year 1831, by the Earl of Ripon and Lord Howick, the principle then introduced by the authority of the Crown being that by which the noble Lord, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, now proposed to be governed. He conceived that it was far more desirable that the regulations of 1831, and any alterations which might have been introduced in them from time to time, should have been tried under the authority of the Crown, rather than that the assent of Parliament should have been asked to their immediate adoption; and he thought that it would have been a great evil if, without experience, the House had been at first called upon to legislate upon the subject of the sale of colonial lands, and if they had proceeded to legislate, and had passed an Act of Parliament, which they might eventually have found unfitted for the maintenance of the general interests of the colonies, and of those whose views were directed towards their support. The time had now arrived, however, when, after trial, many of those regulations had been found to be useful and applicable, and, as the noble Lord had truly said, many changes had taken place, and when some permanent system should be established, and should receive the sanction of Parliament. As to the particular mode in which the noble Lord proposed to introduce these regulations into his bill, the period to make any objections which he might have to make would more properly come when the bill was before the House, and when he had been able to see how the various regulations were proposed to be enforced. He could not say, that he was entirely persuaded that New Zealand should be treated in the same manner as New South Wales and South and Western Australia; but he would not now trouble the House with any observations on this point, except that, for reasons which he would hereafter give, he thought that an exception should be made in respect of that colony. He concurred also with the noble Lord in the principle which he had laid down, that it was not fit to declare absolutely that the sums of money derived from the sale of land should be exclusively devoted to the purposes of emigration. He believed that he had correctly understood the noble Lord to say, that a portion of the money was to be given for the purposes of emigration, but that as to the remainder, a discretion was to be given to the governor with regard to its application. That was, he thought, the best mode in which this much-disputed question could be settled. The principle of applying all the produce of these sales to emigration had been urged by a gentleman, no longer a Member of this House—he meant Mr. Grote—and had been ably placed before the House by him and by others in the late House of Commons, but the sense of the House had been pronounced decidedly against its adoption. He for his own part concurred in the mode of settlement suggested by the noble Lord, and he should be extremely anxious to see the details of the plan which he proposed carried out. In conclusion he would only repeat, that he should be happy to co-operate with the noble Lord in giving his vote in favour of his bills, which he thought were much needed, and the subject of which he was glad to find had attracted his attention.

Mr. *H. G. Ward* congratulated the House on the proposition of these most useful and practical measures by the noble Lord the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and was rejoiced to find that the principles urged by those who took part in the debates upon this question in the last Parliament had been recognised in them. He, for one, thanked the noble Lord for having come forward at so early a period of the Session, for he conceived that such a course guaranteed not only the fullest consideration of the questions which had formed the subject-matter of his attention, but the final adoption of the best and most complete plan for the remedy of the existing evils. With regard to the measures themselves, he conceived that there never could be any doubt among those intimately acquainted with the subject as to the propriety of taking a part of the funds arising from the sale of lands for the purposes of emigration. In the introduction of these bills he believed that very great concessions had been made; but he thought that eventually an arrangement would be made, highly beneficial to the country, and to the colonies, whose interests were proposed to be provided for. He should be most happy to afford any assistance to the noble Lord which his humble abilities might enable him to offer.

Mr. *Vernon Smith* said, that, on the first introduction of these measures he should offer no observation, because he thought that they were mainly in furtherance of the principles of the noble Lord the late Secretary of State for the Colonies. But there was one question which seemed to belong to the subject now introduced by the noble Lord opposite (Lord Stanley), though perhaps it did not strictly come within it, in reference to which he would ask a question. In the *Gazette* of Tuesday last an order in council had appeared, permitting or promising to permit, with certain restrictions which were to be imposed in India, and under regulations which were specified, the transportation of hill coolies from India to the Mauritius. The House would recollect that in 1840 his noble Friend near him (Lord John Russell) proposed a discussion upon a similar measure, to which the House refused its assent. He wished to know from the noble Lord, whether that order in council had been made upon any further information than had been obtained at the close of the last Session, and whether he was prepared to lay before Parliament that information and the order in council, or to enter into a discussion upon the subject?

Mr. *Roebuck* would not touch upon the question referred to by the right hon. Gentleman who had just resumed his seat, but would address himself to the bills proposed to be introduced by the noble Lord, and more especially to that part of them which referred to emigration into the colonies, and to the disposition of the proceeds of the land sales. He objected to the proposition of the noble Lord on these points and he rather suspected that the noble Lord was acquainted with the nature of his objection to the principles which he advocated. The noble Lord said, that he desired to introduce some permanent system respecting the sale of lands in the colonies of Australia, and he spoke of those lands as belonging to the Crown, and said, that it was a privilege of the Crown which he was about to give up, and that he must, therefore, confine the application of his proposition to the life of the present Sovereign. He totally dissented from that doctrine; it was not a privilege of the Crown, and the Crown had nothing to do with the money so derived, and had never yet laid claim to it. But further than that, he went so far as to say that it was their duty not to legislate in any way for these lands. They should define the limits of the colonies which were formed, that emigrants might go out and meet the difficulties of which they knew nothing at home, and that, in return for these hardships they should derive from the land all the benefits which might arise from their position and the peculiarity of their condition. He believed that a really well-conducted system of colonization would consist in an accurate definition of the limits of the colonies; in making them small; and that when each colony possessed a certain number of inhabitants, it should receive the means of governing itself, no power being reserved to the Government at home of overlooking or controverting the lands of the colonies, which should be altogether given to the colonists themselves. He objected also to the principle laid down by the noble Lord and by the hon. Member for Sheffield, that there should be any application of these funds for the purposes of emigration. He knew that it was a favorite theory with many writers and speakers, that the proceeds of the lands of the colonies should be applied exclusively to the purposes of colonization. That was, however, nothing more nor less than an additional clause in the Poor-law Act—it was a sending to the colonies, by means of the proceeds of the colonies, the poor of this country: and he knew, as the noble Lord the Secretary for the Colonies also knew, that a colony to which the noble Lord had not addressed himself, had ample means of knowing the effect of this. He knew that a large portion of the colonists conveyed to the shores of British North America had been induced to go there upon erroneous views; and that the colonists who had preceded them, and who had prepared that country for their reception, were at this time over-run by our poor; and not long ago—not many months before the noble Lord the Member for the city of London had quitted the office now held by the noble Lord opposite, that noble Lord recommended to the people already in the colony, to lay a tax on emigrants to prevent a further increase of their burdens. The people of Canada had already attempted this, and it was, one of the means adopted in this House to create an ill-feeling against them; but they had been compelled in self-defence to adopt the course which they had taken, as a means of preventing the emigration of the poor from England. He believed, therefore, that the proceeds of the land sales to the purposes of emigration to South Australia would be productive of mischievous effects, for though it might be said that there was a great want of labour there, he answered, that without capital it could not be employed, and that if a large number of persons were introduced into a colony without adequate means of employment or support, a serious mischief was occasioned. How, he asked, were these people to govern themselves, or to make roads? Roads and bridges and other internal communications must be made by the people of the colony, and must be maintained by them, and the best means of doing so, as well as of satisfying the demands of their own government, would be derived from the land fund. He called upon the House, therefore, to devote this fund, and the lands from which it was to be derived, to the comfort and happiness of the colonists themselves. Let them not legislate for their own purposes, nor exclusively for the purposes of emigration, but let them look to the real object which they ought to have in view—the happiness of the people, for whose interest it was their duty to care. He most earnestly put in his protest against the principles which had been advanced, and to which he had referred, by which the proceeds of the colony were to be made applicable to other than purely colonial purposes. No lawyer could prove by any means that those funds belonged to the Crown. The colonies did not belong to the Crown, except as part of its dominions; and these funds did not belong to the Crown, but to the people of England. The interests of the colonists were the interests of the people of England, and they would be best cared for, by allowing them to provide for them themselves; and he felt convinced that those interests would be better cared for, and that jobbing, which it was the noble Lord's object to avoid, would be better prevented by permitting them to dispose of their own funds than by any vain attempt to legislate at a distance of thousands of miles.

Sir *George Grey* said, that having been chairman of the committee which sat last year upon the subject of our South Australian possessions, he could not allow this opportunity to pass without expressing his satisfaction at the nature of the second of the two bills proposed to be introduced by the noble Lord. So far as he could gather from the statement which the noble Lord had made to the House, it appeared that the details of the measures now brought forward had been taken from the resolutions of the committee to which he had referred, without any alteration being made. The recommendations of that committee, it was true, were confined to South Australia alone, but the noble Lord, the Member for Sunderland (Viscount Howick) had strongly urged that they should be made applicable to all the Australian colonies, and it was only because the committee was appointed solely with a view to South Australia that that recommendation was withheld. With regard to the fixing of a minimum price of land, he begged to suggest to the noble Lord the necessity for the greatest caution. A great deal of discussion had taken place in the committee upon this point, and it was a question which the noble Lord would feel required material consideration before it was decided upon. With regard to the first bill proposed to be introduced he had no observation to make, except that as to the question which had been before put by the right hon. Gentleman near him (Mr. V. Smith), he did not think that it was quite so foreign to the subject of a passengers' bill as might at first be supposed. The removal of the prohibition of the exportation of hill coolies, subject to the regulations proposed, from the East Indies to the Mauritius, was a subject which seemed to him to come within the object of a Passengers' Act, and he hoped the noble Lord would inform the House of the nature of the provisions intended to be made, or of the information upon which the order in council had been adopted.

Mr. *W. Smith O'Brien* believed, that the bills intended to be introduced by the noble Lord would have a good effect, but all that he complained of was, that they did not go far enough, for he did not see why they should not be extended in their principles to the Cape of Good Hope, to New Brunswick, and all the other colonies of Great Britain, with the concurrence of the local legislature. He should like to know whether the noble Lord had any reason to urge why they should not be so extended, or why, at a time when the poor of this country, and of Ireland and Scotland, were most eagerly soliciting from the Government the means of carrying their labour to those parts of the empire in which, so far from its being considered a burden, it would be most cheerfully welcomed as a new capital engrafted upon the country, means were not to be taken for the purpose of carrying out the principle to the fullest extent. With regard to the observation of the hon. Member for Bath, he must say, that he had never heard a speech displaying so great a want of information; for, with the exception of some French Canadian publications, he had seen no document proceeding from the colonists of Canada which did not hail the arrival of emigrant labour as a boon. He hoped, therefore, that this speech would not impede the progress of the Government, but that they would proceed until they had given to every poor man in this country the opportunity of transferring his labour to those parts of the empire where it was wanted.

Lord *Stanley* said, that two questions had been put to him, and to which he would give answers. He would answer first the questions put to him by the hon. Member for Limerick, why he had not proposed to extend the system of emigration to the Cape of Good Hope and other colonies belonging to this kingdom. He had to state, first, that the opinion of the governor of the Cape was, that in its present condition that colony was not in a state in which a considerable number of labouring emigrants could be advantageously introduced into it; and he therefore did not recommend the introduction of such persons there: and next, that the plan of emigration which he proposed was altogether based on the realization of a fund from the land sales, and that in respect to the colonies referred to by the hon. Member, there would be no such fund arising from such a source. The colony of the Cape was peculiarly circumstanced as regarded its relative quantities of fertile and barren land, and this fact, together with the impossibility of establishing a survey by which systematic land sales could be effected, rendered it useless to think of extending the principle of emigration to this colony. With respect to the question referred to by the two right hon. Gentlemen opposite relative to the order in council, it was true, that upon a full consideration by the Government, they had come to the opinion, that it was not expedient or possible any longer to continue the absolute prohibition of immigration of East-India labourers to the colony of the Mauritius, and that it became their duty to consider the best mode of guarding that immigration from improper conduct, which there was no doubt had prevailed to a great extent. But that no step might be taken without the concurrent action of three bodies, it had been determined, that this proceeding should be sanctioned first by an order in council, secondly, by the vote of money required from the Mauritius, for the purpose of carrying it into effect, and thirdly, by the Governor-general of India in council, who was charged by personal communications, as well as by means of despatches, to impose those restrictions which were requisite to be of the most stringent nature; but which he might venture to say, could be no less stringent to be effectual than those proposed by the noble Lord opposite with regard to the emigration of labourers from Sierra Leone to our West-Indian possessions. He was perfectly ready not only to lay the order in council before the House, but also the despatches from the Governor-general of India, and Sir Lionel Smith, in their respective capacities, which had been adopted as justifying the measures roposed by the Government.

Captain *Fitzroy* would offer one or two observations to the House on the speech of the hon. Member for Bath, and he was extremely sorry to find that any Member of that House should at once make an objection to the plan brought forward by the noble Lord, when he himself at the commencement of his speech showed how little he could be acquainted with the subject which he discussed. The hon. Member had made a proposal, that the extent of the colonies should be limited, that they should be made smaller than they now were, and that when they were established their precise limits should be laid down, and that they should not be afterwards exceeded. He asked how the hon. Member could make such a proposition, when he referred to the state of the colony of New South Wales particularly? In that colony rewards were repeatedly offered for the discovery of new tracts of land where flocks of sheep might be fed, because it was found that the existing limits of the colony were insufficient for the purposes for which pasture was required. Under such circumstances, he conceived that it must be obvious, that such a course as that pointed out by the hon. Member could not be adopted, for that it would be impossible to define the limits of such colonies as those he referred to, until the natural boundaries of the country, or the necessities of the colonists, had pointed out the limits to which only they should extend.

Leave given to bring in a bill to regulate the carriage of passengers in merchant vessels; and also a bill to regulate the survey and sales of land belonging to the Crown in the Australian Colonies, and New Zealand.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Saturday, February 5, 1842.

Their Lordships met and carried up the Address to her Majesty.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Saturday, February 5, 1842.

Minutes.] Bill. 2ª· Appropriation Acts Amendment.

The Speaker, accompanied by a considerable number of Members, carried up the Address to her Majesty.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, February 7, 1842.

Minutes.] Petitions. Metropolitan Bridge Tolls; for Amendment of Weights and Measures Act; from Lord-Provost, and Town-council, for Modification of Corn-laws.

Bill. 1ª· Buildings Regulations; Boroughs Improvement; Spiritual Corporations Leases; Ecclesiastical Benefices Demises.

Building Regulations—Borough Improvements.] The Marquess of *Normanby* said, that he was anxious to redeem his pledge of last Session respecting two bills, one called the Buildings Regulation Bill, and the other the Borough Improvement Bill. They had twice been brought forward, and twice carried through their lordships' House: if they now were adopted for the third time, even if amended in the other House, provided the principle were retained, he should be ready to adopt the changes.

The Buildings Regulation Bill and the Borough Improvement Bill were presented by the noble Marquess, and read a first time.

Her Majesty's Answer to the Address.] The *Lord Chancellor* read the following answer from her Majesty to the Address of the House, voted on Thursday last.

My Lords,

This affectionate and loyal Address gives Me the truest Satisfaction.

I thank you for it sincerely, as well as for your Congratulations on the Birth of the Prince, my Son, and for the Regard which you express on this Occasion to My Person and Government.

My Wish is, and ever will be, to promote the Prosperity and Happiness of My faithful People.

Her Majesty's Answer was ordered to be entered on the journals.

Prince Albert's Answer to the Address.] The Marquis of *Exeter*, accompanied by Lord *Colville*, reported the answer of his Royal Highness Prince Albert to the Address of the House. It was read by the former noble Lord as follows:—

"My Lords,—This instance of your kind attention to me, and of your loyal affection to the Queen, calls for my hearty thanks. The happiness and prosperity of this great kingdom, to which this event more closely unites me, will always have my earnest wishes and my earnest prayer."

The Answer of his Royal Highness was also directed to be entered on the journals.

Forgery of Exchequer-bills.] The Duke of *Wellington* wished to represent to the noble lord, who had given a notice for to-day connected with the late fraudulent transaction in Exchequer-bills, the expediency of postponing it. The notice had been given on Friday prior to the usual hour for commencing business, or he should then have requested the noble Lord to defer it until certain papers relating to the recent enquiry into the subject already on the Table were printed, and in the hands of Members. Another ground for that course was, that their Lordships should wait to see what was done upon the same question in another place, to which it might be said more properly to belong. He hoped, therefore, that the noble Lord would consent to fix his projected motion for a future day.

Lord *Monteagle* said, that a misapprehension had gone abroad as to the day for which he had fixed his motion. He had named the 17th, and not the 7th of February, and if on the 17th it should be thought expedient to postpone it, he should be quite ready to yield to the wishes of the House, and to pay that respect to the recommendation of the noble Duke which of course it would always deserve. He had felt a particular necessity and urgency for giving a notice on the subject on the earliest possible day after the meeting of Parliament, even before the report to which the noble Duke had alluded was in his hands, or in those of any other peer. He should be prepared at the proper time to show that independently of any inquiry by commissioners, considering the peculiarly parliamentary responsibility of the office he had the honour to hold, a case might possibly be made out for a parliamentary investigation also. Viewing the subject in that light, the noble Duke would be aware that it behoved him to give his notice without the slightest knowledge of, or reference to, the report of the commissioners. Had he waited until that report had been made, it might have been said that he wished to appeal to the House against the opinion and recommendation of the commissioners. He felt every confidence that the commission, very properly issued by her Majesty's Government at the earliest moment, had conducted its inquiry in a manner most satisfactory to the public; therefore the last object in his mind was to take any step that could imply suspicion, or derogate in any way from the responsibility of the commissioners. If he were allowed to say one word more it would be that, after having during a long period been engaged on the part of the public in arduous and painful duties, which he trusted he had performed to the satisfaction of the Members of Government themselves—after having been repeatedly the object of attack and vituperation—very immaterial as affecting himself, but which might be very material as affecting the public securities—he had thought it right not to enter into any personal controversy on personal matters, but to take the earliest opportunity, after Parliament had met, to claim, and to entreat of their Lordships, to whom, in common with the other House of Parliament, he was responsible, to enter upon the most rigorous and searching investigation, in order to ascertain whether what had occurred, had, in any way, originated with him in the discharge of the duties of his office. In the exercise of the power vested in their Lordships, and in the other House of Parliament, this was an inquiry which Parliament might with great propriety institute. He had deemed it right to say thus much in justification of his notice in order to remove the misapprehension of the noble Duke, either that it was meant to imply want of confidence in the proceedings of Government, or in those to whom the investigation of the subject had by the Government been delegated. Before he sat down he might be allowed to add one word more, and he only added it because it concerned the value of the public securities. It had been said, in some of the newspapers of Saturday, that the present Assistant-Comptroller of the Exchequer, Mr. Perceval, held his office merely by the appointment of Mr. Eden, the late Assistant-Comptroller. If that statement were true, not one of the Exchequer Bills signed by Mr. Perceval would be worth the paper on which it was written. It was not only not true, but the very reverse was the fact; the resignation of Mr. Eden took place before Mr. Perceval was appointed, and that appointment of Mr. Perceval was not on the nomination of Mr. Eden, but in due course, under a Treasury warrant, signed by three Lords of the Treasury. In the course of this evening or to-morrow, he (Lord Monteagle) wished to move for copies of the appointments of Mr. Eden and Mr. Perceval, in order to set the matter right with the public. He also was anxious to have upon the Table, what there could be no objection to produce, the correspondence between the Lords of the Treasury and the Comptroller-General, and the instructions given as to the mode in which the inquiry should be conducted, so that the whole transaction should be completely before the House. He fixed his motion at present for the 17th of February, assuring the noble Duke at the same time that if any reason then existed for deferring it, he should be most ready to comply with the suggestion.

MARRIAGES BY DISSENTING CLERGY (IRELAND).] The Marquess of *Clanricarde*, in pursuance of notice, rose to present a petition, and to put a question to the noble Duke respecting marriages solemnised by Presbyterian ministers between members of their own persuasion and Episcopalians. He observed that no Marriage Act had been passed in Ireland, as in this country since the year 1753. He had hoped that some general measure would have been introduced, but he had been disappointed. Unfortunately the Legislature not having stirred in the matter, the judicial authorities in Ireland had taken a new course, and had caused the greatest dismay, especially in the north of the sister kingdom, by declaring all marriages void which had been performed by Presbyterian ministers between Presbyterians and members of the Church of England. Hitherto such marriages had been considered legal, but in a recent case of bigamy the counsel for the prisoner had taken an objection to the legality of the first marriage, on the ground he had stated, and that objection having been referred to the judges, a majority had decided in favour of the objection. It would be presumptuous for him to say that the recent decision was bad law, but he might observe that it was directly in the teeth of what had been hitherto considered and ruled to be law. Only five years ago a man had been convicted at Carrickfergus of bigamy, in whose favour the same objection had been raised and over-ruled; the offender was accordingly transported, and was now suffering the sentence of the law. In cases that respected civil rights and questions of maintenance, marriages under similar circumstances had been held to be good. It had been stated publicly that Ministers were preparing a bill to remedy the immediate evil, and it would certainly be the height of iniquity to allow innocent parties who had been married under a misapprehension of the law to suffer for their mistake. He begged to ask, therefore, whether any bill was to be introduced, whether it would have a prospective as well as a retrospective effect, and whether it would affect the various religious denominations in Ireland? The petition he had to present was from members of the Presbyterian church residing in Dublin; but he knew that others of the same kind were on their way from the north of Ireland.

The Duke of *Wellington* replied that her Majesty's Government intended immediately to introduce a bill to remedy the evils resulting from the late decision of the judges in Ireland. A further measure was also contemplated of a permanent kind, and directed against the present anomalous state of the law in that country, but it required more consideration. When it had received the attention due to the subject, and was fully prepared, it would be brought forward in Parliament.

Lord *Brougham* asked out of what case the recent decision had proceeded?

The Marquess of *Clanricarde* answered that it had arisen out of the case of a man of the name of Smith, tried for bigamy.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, February 7, 1842.

MINUTES.] Bills. *Reported*,—Appropriation Acts Amendment.—1ª· Designs Copyright.

Petitions presented. By Mr. Thorneley, from Liverpool, and other places, by Mr. Busfeild, from forty places in Lancashire, by Mr. A. Johnston, from Kilmarnock, and other places, by Mr. T. M. Gibson, from Manchester, by Mr. Wakley, from Finsbury, by Mr. Brotherton, from Salford, and other places in Lancashire, by Mr. Villiers, from Westbury, and other places, by Sir George Staunton, from Gosport, and other places, by Mr. Macaulay, from Edinburgh, by Mr. Dennistoun, Mr. Ewart, and a number of other Members, from a great many places, for the Total Repeal of the Corn-laws.—By Sir R. Bateson, Mr. E. Tennent, and Mr. Grogan, from Presbyterians in Ireland, for the legalization of their Marriage Ceremonies.—By Sir C. Napier, from Mr. Snooks, to investigate his plan to prevent the Collision of Ships.—By Lord Newry, from Spirit Dealers in Newry, for a revision of the Laws concerning Spirit Licences (Ireland).—From St. Mary, Ross, for Repeal of Union; from Cranbrook, for Exemption of Workhouses from Parochial Rates.

THE QUEEN'S ANSWER TO THE ADDRESS.] The *Speaker* informed the House that he had attended her Majesty with the Address of the House, to which her Majesty had been pleased to return the following most gracious answer:—

"Gentlemen—I return you my hearty thanks for this dutiful and affectionate address.

"Your congratulations on the birth of the Prince, my son, are cordially received by me as a proof of your loyal attachment to my person and Government.

"The happiness of my people is the first object of my care, and you may rely on my co-operation in every measure which is conducive to the promotion of their welfare."

Her Majesty's answer was ordered to be entered on the journals.

PRINCE ALBERT'S ANSWER.] The Earl of *Lincoln* appeared at the Bar, and reported that the deputation appointed to wait upon his royal highness Prince Albert with the Address of the House, had attended his royal Highness accordingly, and that his royal Highness had been pleased to say:

"I return you my warmest thanks for this gratifying instance of your attention to me, and duty to the Queen.

"I thank you for your cordial participation in the happiness which the birth of our son has caused us, and assure you, that the prosperity of my country will ever be the first object of my wishes."

This answer was also ordered to be entered on the journals.

POOR-LAW—FACTORY REGULATIONS.] Mr. *S. Wortley*, seeing his right hon. Friend, the Secretary for the Home Department in his place, was desirous of making some inquiry in regard to two subjects of great and general importance. Those two subjects were, the revision of the Poor-law Amendment Act, and the regulation of factory labour. His reason for putting these questions at the present time, was, that with regard to the Poor-law, no reference was made to it in her Majesty's Speech, and this omission——

The *Speaker* said, the hon. Gentleman must confine himself to the question he desired to put.

Mr. *S. Wortley* said, he was merely anxious to state his reasons for asking the questions. What he wished to ask his right hon. Friend, was, what was the general course the Government intended to take in respect to the revision of the existing Poor-law, and also what were their intentions upon the subject of regulating the labour in factories?

Sir *J. Graham* was understood to say his hon. Friend had prefaced his questions by some short, though somewhat irregular, observations as to the omission in the Queen's Speech. The reason that no notice was taken of the Poor-law in the Speech from the Throne was, that it was considered already sufficiently notorious that the present act would expire on the 31st of July next, and as some measure upon the subject must therefore be brought forward, it was not thought that any especial mention of the subject was necessary. In reply to his hon. Friend's question, he had to state, that it was the intention of her Majesty's Government to introduce a bill for the continuance of the Poor-law commission; and in that bill he should propose to the House such alterations and amendments in the existing law, as, upon mature deliberation, appeared to him necessary and prudent. With regard to the time of the introduction of that measure, that must depend on the progress of other business which would be previously brought forward. As far as he could at present speak of their intentions, Government did not propose to bring in the bill until after Easter. As to the second question which his hon. Friend had put to him, whether the Government intended to bring in any measure for the regulation of labour in factories, he had to state in reply, that he had found a bill in his office which had been prepared, he believed, by the hon. Member for Perth (Mr. Fox Maule), in conformity with the recommendations of the committee that had sat on the subject; and he proposed to bring in that bill with some alterations. He might, however, mention, that those alterations would materially affect the regulation of infant labour between the ages of nine and thirteen, as at present by law defined; and it was also proposed to make some alterations as to the regulation of the labour of what were called young persons —that was, persons between the ages of thirteen and eighteen; but it was not his intention, on the part of the Government, to propose any such regulation as in some quarters had been strongly recommended, as to the limitation of the time of labour in factories of young persons between the ages of thirteen and eighteen, as some persons hoped, to ten hours a-day.

Lord *Ashley* begged to know from his right hon. Friend, whether the regulations he proposed with respect to employment of children between the ages of nine and thirteen, were those which had been recommended by the committee of 1840; and whether he proposed any diminution in the number of working hours in regard to young persons between the ages of thirteen and eighteen?

Sir *J. Graham* thought that his noble Friend would, on consideration, perceive the inconvenience of entering into any explanation as to the detail of the measure at the present time; as if he did not fully explain all the intentions of the Government, much misapprehension might arise. He would, therefore, satisfy himself by saying, that no limitation in the hours of labour of young persons was contained in the bill; and, with regard to infant labour, it would be inexpedient that he should give any further explanation until the bill should be brought before the House.

INFORMERS (IRELAND).] Mr. *John O'Connell*, seeing the noble Lord, the Secretary for Ireland in his place, wished to ask whether he had read the statement of the criminal Delahunt, that he swore "against Cooney and his wife, in the hopes of having pay at the Castle," and also, "swore against the men for the assault on Mr. Cradock for the same motive, and without knowing one of them." He asked whether the noble Lord's attention had been called to that statement, and whether there was to be any alteration in a system of employing informers, against which a very strong feeling existed in Ireland?

Lord *Eliot*, too much feared that the crime of Delahunt was partly attributable to the system which had been referred to. But, consistently with the present state of Ireland, he could not hold out any hope that the practice would be discontinued, They all knew how difficult it was to procure evidence in criminal cases in Ireland, and if the witnesses were not protected from injury, that difficulty would be increased. The subject should, however, be brought again under the consideration of persons competent to decide. At present, he could hold out no hope of of a change.

PRIVY COUNCIL — JUDICIAL COMMITTEE.] Mr. *Charles Buller* inquired whether it was the intention of her Majesty's Government to introduce a bill in the present Session, for regulating the judicial committee of the Privy Council, and more particularly whether it were their intention to appoint a new judicial officer as the head?

Sir *Robert Peel* begged to say, that the report which the hon. Gentleman might have seen with respect to the appointment of a new judicial officer, was altogether without foundation. Great efforts had been made in reducing the arrears of appeals during the past year, and results had been produced more satisfactory, he believed, than in any year since 1830; and, in fact, at the present time there was an arrear of only fifteen cases, which were ready for hearing. Before any attempt was made to amend the appellate jurisdiction of the Privy Council, therefore, it would be seen how far its present position might not prove satisfactory for the discharge of the important duties imposed upon it. It was to be observed, that the judicial committee had been greatly strengthened during the last year, by the appointment of two Vice-Chancellors, and the addition of other judges, who, having retired from the bench, were able to devote the whole, or a great portion of their time to the transactions of the business of this particular court. The appointment of the two new Vice-Chancellors had had a most important effect upon the list of causes in Chancery, for the arrear of 500 causes had been already reduced to 200; and although, of course, this circumstance could have no effect on the business of the judicial committee of the Privy Council, yet, as it was possible that the Vice-Chancellors might have some leisure at their disposal, and might take a more active part in the proceedings of the judicial committee of the Privy Council, it was thought that any measure for the alteration of the condition of this court might be altogether postponed. Having received notice from the hon. and learned Member of his intention to ask this question, he thought it a fitting opportunity to add the explanation which he had given.

TEXAS.] Mr. *O'Connell* begged to inquire of the right hon. Baronet at the head of her Majesty's Government, whether the commercial treaty with Texas had been confirmed?

Sir *Robert Peel:* No, I think not. If the right hon. and learned Gentleman will repeat his question to-morrow, I shall be able to answer him with more certainty.

SCOTCH CHURCH.] Mr. *Fox Maule* begged to ask the right hon. Baronet whether it was his intention, or that of any Member of her Majesty's Government, to bring in during the present Session of Parliament, any measure with reference to the case of the Church of Scotland?

Sir *Robert Peel:* Whenever I have a measure connected with the Church of Scotland I will give ample notice of it to the House, and to the right hon. Gentleman who has made this inquiry. I think it is hardly fair to call on the Members of Government, in the position of the present Government, to disclose their intention of bringing forward measures or not; but I will give ample notice of every measure which I propose to introduce. The right hon. Gentleman must excuse me, however, if I decline pledging my self not to introduce one.

CHURCH EXTENSION.] Mr. *Hawes* hoped that he should be more fortunate than his right hon. Friend near him in getting an answer to the question which he was about to put. He begged to ask of the honourable Baronet, the Member for the University of Oxford, whether it were his intention, in the course of this Session, again to bring the question of church extension under the consideration of the House?

Sir *R. H. Inglis* said, that he had to thank the hon. Member for his courtesy in apprising him of his intention to put this question, in answer to which he begged to say, that it was his intention to call the attention of the present Parliament, as he had done that of the last Parliament, to the subject of church extension, having never lost sight of the extreme importance of this question.

Mr. *Hawes* asked whether the hon. Baronet proposed to bring forward the question this Session?

Sir *R. H. Inglis:* This Session.

SPANISH CLERGY.] Lord *John Manners* inquired of the right hon. and learned Member for Cork, whether he proposed to bring the condition of the Spanish clergy before the House this Session?

Mr. *O'Connell* said, that it was his intention to bring the subject before the House. He thought that there could not be a class more entitled to the sympathy of that House than these unfortunate clergy, or a subject more calling for their attention, than the infamous system which the Spanish government had pursued in relation to them.

COLONIAL TRADE — DUTIES] Mr. *Labouchere* begged to ask the right hon. Gentleman, the Vice-President of the Board of Trade, what course he proposed to pursue with regard to the motion of which he had given notice for to-morrow, in reference to the importation of goods in the British colonies? He imagined that the right hon. Gentleman would take the usual course of laying his plan before the House, and adjourn the final consideration of the question to a future day.

Mr *W. E. Gladstone* said, that the right hon. Gentleman had correctly estimated the course he intended to pursue. His intention was, to move that the House do resolve itself into a committee of the whole House, to consider the acts relating to the trade of the British possessions abroad, and to make certain alterations in the duties now by law payable upon goods, wares, and merchandises imported and brought into the British possessions in America and the Mauritius. He should, then, submit a schedule of the duties which he proposed to substitute for those which now existed, and, having moved that it be printed, he should propose a postponement of the discussion to a future day, until which he should not ask for any vote. Undoubtedly, he should wish to fix that day for the earliest period possible, consistently with the nature of the subject, and the business of the House.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS.] Mr. *Wallace* rose, to move that the usage which has prevailed of late years, of abstaining from discussing the petitions of the people at the time of their presentation, shall not be sanctioned in the present Parliament; but that the practice which formerly prevailed in the House of discussing petitions at the time of their presentation shall be restored. The hon. Member said, that before the year 1833, it had been usual to state to the House the opinions expressed by the petitioners, and this was a practice which had been permitted to prevail under the Speakership of Mr. Manners Sutton. He did not mean to say, that great inconvenience had not arisen from Members pushing this privilege beyond the bounds of prudence, while he did mean to say, that the refusal to allow Members to speak at all upon the presentation of petitions was unjust to their constituents, and led to an improper suppression of public opinion in that House. It appeared to him to be a selfish course, instead of a proper discharge of a public duty. There were, no doubt, many persons in the House who wished that their time should not be occupied at all by the presentations of petitions, but who wished that they should merely be laid on the Table of the House, or who were ready, at most, to allow a few words of them, with the prayer, to be read. Now that was not the way in which the people expected their petitions would be treated. They did not wish to see them lying in hundreds upon the Table, and crammed into a bag, while not the slightest attention had been paid to their contents. He did not intend to complain in any way of the conduct of their chief Clerk, who duly discharged the duty imposed upon him, but it was of the usage of the House of which he complained, and complained most loudly. He had already said, that there was a time when the course of practice had been different, but the last Parliament—to which he felt that it was no honour to have belonged — a poor do nothing reckless thing, on which he was sorry to have wasted his time and his health, it appeared had introduced this new rule. He did not mean to advocate any waste of the time of the House; on the contrary, he wished to discharge his duties as far as he was concerned, with justice to his constituents; but he did not wish to be muzzled, although such had been his condition since the 7th of February, 1839. He had declared at the commencement of each preceding Session that he would call the attention of the House to that subject, but he had such respect for the majority of the House, that he had refrained from pressing it upon them, although he felt that the perseverance in the practice which he complained of was unconstitutional. The Parliament which had in this respect taken away the liberties of the people was designated a Whig Parliament; the present was designated a Tory Parliament. The vote of that night would show which had most respect for the liberty of the subject—for that right of petitioning, which he held to be one of the highest privileges of the people. He was quite aware how important it was that the public business should commence as early as possible, and he was as anxious that that object should be secured as either the present Ministers of the Crown or their predecessors in office could possibly be. But he was still more anxious that the rights and privileges of the people should not be infringed upon, and he said that those privileges had been destroyed in a manner which was perfectly unjustifiable. If the present Government proceeded as the last Government had done in June and July, they would have five or six bills introduced every night, or as many as sixty or seventy per month. He was not there to support any Ministry, and he was prepared to show the truth of what he had said, and that the conduct of the late Government had been such that it was impossible to transact any business, except that of the Government. It was true that petitions might be printed with the votes; but that privilege was not accorded at all times, and, only when the House chose to allow it. He had had a petition entrusted to him to present from Kelso, in Roxburghshire, which was one of the best possible description, both as regarded its principle and its composition. It prayed that the laws which were passed by that House should be printed as cheaply as the votes which were circulated to Members of that House. He moved that the petition should be printed with the votes, and it was so printed, and his name was appended to it, but such was the condition of the business of the House that the session terminated, and he never had an opportunity of bringing forward the petition. That petition was indeed nominally presented and was printed, but he held that no petition was properly presented until the hon. Member who laid it before the House had an opportunity of making a statement upon its contents. The moment a Member got up, however, and attempted to say anything about a petition, he was interrupted by others, who prevented his proceeding. The clerk, perhaps, then might be desired to read the petition at the Table, but what was the consequence: if it came from many of the towns in Scotland, the clerk was unable to pronounce the name of it, so that the object of the presentation of the petition failed altogether. The same observation was also applied to many places in Ireland and Wales. What he desired was, that in future there should be a general rule adopted, that all those who presented petitions should be at liberty to state, generally, their contents, the prayers of those petitions, and the objects or wishes of the petitioners. That should be strictly the right of the Members of the House, whether a collision of opinion or a discussion took place, as he did not hesitate in saying that the present mode of dealing with the rights of the people was unjust towards them and inconvenient to the House. The hon. Member said that it had just been suggested to him, that the proper mode of proceeding would be to move that the resolution of the 7th February, 1839, be rescinded, and he, therefore, begged to move that that resolution be read, with that object.

Resolution of February 8, 1839, read as follows:

"The Order of the Day being read, for resuming the adjourned Debate upon the Question proposed yesterday, 'That this House adhere to the established practice with respect to the presentation of Petitions as laid down by Mr. Speaker;'

"The House was moved, That the entry in the Journal of the House, of the Resolution of the House of the 6th day of February 1833, relative to the presentation of public petitions, might be read, and the same was read, as followeth;

'Resolved, That when the contents of a petition have been opened, and the prayer stated by the Member who may have the charge of such petition, Mr. Speaker to desire such Member to bring the same to the Table, and do then direct the Clerk to read it, without allowing any other Member to speak, or putting any question upon such petition, before the same shall have been read, unless it should appear to Mr. Speaker, or to any Member, that the matter of such petition was in breach of the privilege of the House, or that, according to the rules and orders of the House, such petition ought not to be received, in which cases the Question, 'That the petition be brought up,' be put, and agreed to, before such petition be brought up.'

"The House was also moved, That the entry in the votes of the House of yesterday, relative to the presentation of public petitions, might be read; and the same was read, as followeth;

'Mr. Ward, the Member for Sheffield, having in the course of opening to the House a petition from his constituents respecting the Corn-laws, stated that it was his intention not to confine himself solely to the allegations and prayer of the petition, but to enter generally into the subject, was interrupted by Mr. Speaker, who stated that such proceeding on the part of the hon. Member would be contrary to the rule which he considered had received the sanction of the House, 'that no Member, upon the presentation of a petition, should be allowed to enter generally into any subject,' and requested that he might receive the instructions of the House, whether this rule should be maintained.

'Whereupon a discussion took place, and a Motion was made, and the question proposed,

'That this House adhere to the established practice with respect to the presentation of petitions, as laid down by Mr. Speaker.'

'Whereupon, Mr. Speaker was requested to state what he considered to be the rule and practice of the House upon the presentation of petitions.

'Mr. Speaker accordingly stated, That any Member offering any petition to the House, states the place whence it comes, the number of signatures affixed, and also the material contents of the petition; and is entitled, if he requires it, to have it read at the Table.

'That all petitions complaining of personal grievance, and requiring present redress, are entertained and discussed when presented.

'That all petitions which are presented relating to a subject which the Member wishes to bring under the consideration of the House, are printed with the votes, the Member giving notice, when he presents his petition, of the day on which he will make his Motion.

'That all petitions which relate to any subject with respect to which a notice of Motion has been given, or with respect to which any Bill is in progress through the House, are referred to the Committee on Public Petitions, where they are classified, and are, according to the judgment of the Committee, printed in whole or in part.

'Debate adjourned till to-morrow.'

"And the Question being again proposed:—The House resumed the said adjourned Debate:

"And the Question being put, 'That this House adhere to the established practice with respect to the presentation of petitions, as laid down by Mr. Speaker:'

"The House divided;

"The Yeas to the old Lobby; The Noes to the new Lobby;

"Tellers for the Yeas, Mr. Attorney-General, Sir George Grey - - 183

"Tellers for the Noes, Mr. Ward, Mr. Villiers - - - 43

"So it was resolved in the Affirmative."

Mr. *Wallace* believed now that the most convenient way would be to move, "That the usage which has prevailed of late years of abstaining from discussing the petitions of the people at the time of their presentation, shall not be sanctioned in the present Parliament, but that the practice which formerly prevailed in the House, of discussing petitions at the time of their presentation, shall be restored."

The *Speaker* put the question—"That the order now read by the clerk be rescinded."

Mr. *Wallace* said that this was not his motion.

The *Speaker* said, the question which he understood to be put to the House was, that the House would revert to the practice which formerly prevailed of discussing petitions at the time of their presentation. On the 8th of February, 1839, the Speaker was called on to state the practice of the House. The House then came to a resolution to adhere to the practice as stated by the Speaker, and it was absolutely necessary before any new practice was established that that resolution should be rescinded. The question, therefore, he had to put was, that the resolution just read by the clerk at the Table be rescinded.

Sir *R. H. Inglis* said, as it was well known that he had been much in the habit of taking part in all matters relating to the petitions presented to that House, he should make no apology for rising on the present occasion. He could not but think that the success of the motion of the hon. Member for Greenock would result in the absorption of the time of the House. Did not the hon. Member know that the number of petitions presented during the last Session of Parliament amounted to no less than 16,801, and that that number, according to the full extent of the principle advanced by the hon. Member for Greenock, would necessarily involve not only 16,801 speeches, but 16,801 replies? Supposing the hon. Member for Greenock had spoken as he would manifestly have wished upon the petition from Kelso, would he contend that the hon. Member for the county would not have a right to reply? and then would it be denied that there must be, if the principle were acted upon, a complete destruction of all the legislative functions of the House? Did the hon. Member for Greenock consider that if his motion were adopted, the whole Session would be consumed in the reading of petitions, and that, after all he desired to do, even in the case of the Kelso petition, the result would be, that that petition would be ordered to be laid upon the Table? True it was that some benefits might accrue to the petitioners by calling the attention of the House to the state and condition of the trade in which they were engaged, but he would ask, would not this be better done by a specific motion on the part of the hon. Member? He appealed not only to the right hon. Gentleman in the chair, but to other hon. Members of less authority in that House, whether the result of all petitions however introduced, must not be that they be ordered to lie on the Table? He had stated that last year the number of petitions was 16,801; the year before it amounted to 18,000. Could it be doubted, that, even if each petition occupied only one minute the House could do nothing else but receive petitions? There must be some common sense exercised on the subject. He had looked over the petitions which, under the existing regulations of the House, had been printed, and he had found that their average length was half a folio closely printed. Now, he entreated the House just to consider the time which would be occupied in reading such a petition, and if the hon. Member presenting it spoke for two minutes—and he might ask would the hon. Member for Greenock consent to be limited to two minutes, if the rule proposed were carried into effect. He did not deny that there was a great deal of reason in some of the positions of the hon. Member for Greenock, but if the hon. Member's views were carried out, it would be physically impossible for the House to do anything else but receive petitions, and then he begged to ask what was to become of the private bills? The hon. Member had expressed no sympathy for the sixty or seventy public bills introduced at a late period of the last Session by his friends, the late Administration; he could not, therefore, be expected to exhibit any sympathy for the measures which late in the Parliamentary year, her Majesty's present advisers might think it necessary to bring forward; still he begged to ask the hon. Member to have some sympathy for the private bills. In fact, there would be no time for legislation, public or private, if the motion of the hon. Gentleman were carried, and if every Member chose to insist upon his rights under it. He thought that the general understanding was, that when any petition was presented of such importance as to justify its publication, so as to appear with the votes, and on the pledge of the hon. Member presenting such petition specifically to call the attention of the House to its contents, the House seldom hesitated to agree to that course; still it appeared from a return which had been moved for by his hon. Friend, the Chairman of Ways and Means (Mr. Greene), that a large portion of the petitions so printed were not followed up by any motion of the hon. Members who had presented them and given notice. In short, the experiment had been tried, and its success did not justify its being carried further. On these grounds, he must oppose the motion which the hon. Member for Greenock had submitted to the House.

Mr. *Roebuck* said, that, the sole argument advanced by the hon. Baronet who had just resumed his seat against the present motion, was the absorption of the time of the House. Now, he would suggest to the hon. Baronet, a course that he might now pursue under the present regulation, if he were desirous of occupying the time of the House. Whenever a petition was proposed to be laid on the Table, he might divide the House on the question that it "do lie" on the Table. He might feel an objection to the petition, and to exhibit that objection he might demand a division for the purpose of recording his opinion. But the hon. Baronet had said further, that any hon. Member in presenting a petition had a right to call upon the clerk to read it at the Table. But was this ever done? It was not; and as the hon. Baronet had suggested that it would be physically impossible to get through the discussion of all the petitions presented in the course of a Session, even though each speech did not exceed two minutes' duration, so it would be equally impossible for all petitions to be read which were brought to the Table. He might feel an objection to the petition, and to exhibit that objection he might demand a division for the purpose of recording his opinion. But the hon. Baronet had said further, that any hon. Member in presenting a petition had a right to call upon the clerk to read it at the Table. What did this show? That hon. Gentlemen were actuated by a proper feeling of consideration for the House: and why should the hon. Baronet argue, that the feeling of the House would not be equally consulted and obeyed in every other case. He asked whether the course which was proposed was not much more likely to produce the object which the House ought to have in view—namely, the right understanding by the House of the prayer of the petitioners than the system now in existence? Every hon. Member did not feel himself competent to make a speech, and did not go down to the House prepared to make a set oration; but every one who had a petition to present could state the opinions of his constituents, plainly, and clearly, from the petition, and it would be much better that he should state the contents of the petition as he found it, than merely, as was now the custom, lay it on the Table. While the present system continued, the people did not petition, would not petition, and he would add, could not petition. The hon. Baronet had said, that as many as eighteen thousand petitions had been presented in the course of one Session; but how many of these pertained to the same subjects? How many referred to church extension — how many to Corn-laws?

Did the hon. Baronet suppose, that if an hon. Member had twenty petitions upon the subject of church extension, he would make a speech for every one, or that a speech would be made for every petition which was presented? But if the hon. Member was impressed with the peculiar idea of the petition, he ought to come forforward and state it. It was said, that he might state the substance of the petition, but that would not answer the purpose. The substance of the petition merely stated the grievance complained of, but did not state why—did not state the reasons of that complaint. Three minutes would often be sufficient for that purpose, but the present practice put a stopper upon persons trying to make the petitions of the people heard. He would go further, he would say, that no question could be thoroughly discussed either by the House or the country, but upon the old established principle. He would appeal to the hon. Member for Oxford for his assistance. That hon. Member was a Conservative—now the principle of Conservatism, as he understood it, was an acting upon the precedents of former times, and abiding by the usages of our ancestors. Since the Reform Bill a new practice had been introduced in regard to the petitions of the people, a practice somewhat smacking of the times in which we lived, and yet the hon. Member for Oxford had suffered it to pass unnoticed. He was now arguing, upon Conservative principles, for a return to the wholesome practice of our ancestors, and he trusted that, for consistency's sake, the hon. Baronet the Member for Oxford would vote with him. The wants of the people could never be made known to the House while the present practice was persisted in. The newspapers could not make them known to the House—the House knew nothing of newspapers. He was there, as the representative of his constituents, to state their grievances to the House. It was said he might make a motion. To this he would reply, that he might not have an opportunity, he might not be able to speak; although perfectly able to state the feelings of his constituents to the House, he might not have the courage to make a set oration. He would make use of the *argumentum ad hominem* to the hon. Member for Oxford, and claim his vote for this motion upon Conservative grounds, as a return to the practice of our forefathers.

Mr. *Brotherton* thought it necessary to give his reason for voting as he intended. He had as great a regard for the right of petition as any hon. Member could have, and would be the last to say anything to abridge it, but he was sure the present motion would not answer the end which was sought to be attained. He had seen this House, before he was a Member of it, when the proposed plan was in full operation; and he could state that at that time it turned out a perfect failure. The petitions were neither noticed by the newspapers, nor heard by the Members of the House. The time of the House was constantly occupied by a few loquacious Members, who could speak for hours at a stretch, and while they got all their petitions disposed of, no one else had an opportunity of addressing the Speaker. He declared that he had attended that House, since he had become one of its Members, as many as ten days in succession with a petition, seeking an opportunity of presenting it, and when he was successful, he had always abstained from occupying the attention of the House longer than was necessary, because, seeing other hon. Members with petitions in their hands, a sense of propriety and justice had prompted him to make way for them as early as possible. He considered that it would be quite impossible that the public business could be carried on if every Member was allowed to make a speech upon every petition. With respect to the observations that had been made as to the disorderly manner in which petitions were generally presented, he must be allowed to say that he considered the manner in which petitions had been presented latterly, was most orderly. Every Member had an opportunity of stating what were the contents of the petition which he had to present, and he thought that that was quite sufficient; but as to supposing that every Member was to state his own opinions on these petitions, he considered it quite absurd. He was of opinion that the people had a right to have their petitions heard and attended to, but he did not think, that that could be effected by allowing hon. Members to make long speeches upon their presentation. If the present rule could be relaxed without impeding public business, he should not object, provided that it could be shown that the principle of the rule could be adhered to. At present, if a

Member thought a petition of importance, he could give notice of a motion on the subject, and bring the matter under the notice of the House in a formal way.

Mr. *O'Connell* thought, that the petitions of the people were treated in that House with a levity which was unbecoming. He admitted, that the late practice in the presentation of petitions was an inconvenient one, when five or six speeches were made on the presentation of each petition. No doubt this might be considered as trespassing too much on the time of the House. His hon. Friend, however, had clearly shown, that the present practice was attended with great inconvenience. He thought that a middle course should be adopted, because he could not but think that the practice at present adopted was insulting to the people at large. The House ought to refer the question to a committee, which would doubtless devise some means of giving a more substantial hearing to the petitions of the people, so that no one should have a right to complain, as at present, of the mockery and insult of throwing bundles of petitions together on the Table. He hoped, therefore, that the House would rescind its resolution, and follow it up by some plan which would neither trespass upon the public time nor give the people reason to complain.

Sir *Robert Peel* said if any insult were offered to the people through the present mode of presenting petitions of the people—if there were a mockery of ceremony, to use the words of the hon. Gentleman, by throwing bundles of petitions on the Table—that was the fault of the Members who so presented them, because the rules of the House imposed no such necessity. He would refer to the rules which had been adopted by the majority of the last Parliament. The rules said, that any Member presenting a petition must state the place whence it came, so that the hon. Members who were able to pronounce the names of Irish and Scotch places, had liberty to pronounce them properly, which was their duty, not that of the clerk. The Member presenting a petition was bound also to state the number of signatures and the material contents of the petition. If the petition complained of personal grievance, and required immediate redress, it might be entertained and discussed when presented. If a petition involved a subject of a special nature, it might be ordered to be printed with the votes; when presented, it was the duty of the Member presenting it to give notice of the day when he would bring it under the consideration of the House. This system afforded Members every opportunity of calling the attention of the House to petitions. If the Member did not think it expedient to call the attention of the House to the special subject of a petition, the responsibility rested with him. The discussion of petitions on their presentation was not a part of the ancient proceedings in Parliament. He recollected when he first came into Parliament the practice did not exist, and it was comparatively of recent date. He recollected that Mr. Abercrombie had stated from the chair that, in adopting the resolution, they were only resorting to the old practice. Therefore they were only so far conservative in returning to the practice of half a century ago. Now, if they were to return to the late system, there would be no limit to the presentation of petitions. It was true that in the abstract every petition should be read by the clerk, and attended to by the House; but it was clear that if the clerk was to read every petition, their whole time would be absorbed; and if Members would listen carefully, all he could say was, that this would be different from their usual course. But the real question was, did the present mode diminish the confidence of the people? Since the rules adopted the number of petitions had increased. During the last two Sessions their average number was 17,000 each Session. Certainly they would not infer, from the increase of petitions, that the petitioners were dissatisfied with the present mode of proceeding. He believed there was no alternative between adhering to the rule and the complete relaxation of it. If they left the matter to the discretion of every Member, they would in most cases have a debate on the presentation of a petition. The Member presenting it would be anxious to state fully his opinion on the subject-matter of it; this would provoke a reply and a rejoinder, and much time must inevitably be taken up. When the practice of debating petitions existed twelve or thirteen years ago, they had hardly any time left them for debate. In consequence of this the House, at the suggestion of Mr. Manners Sutton, agreed to the resolution of Feb.

6, 1833, which had already been read to the House. He thought that with respect to public feeling on the subject, it would be found that the "general impression" was, that the time of the House was already sufficiently consumed in debating. He did not believe that the great mass of the petitions to that House required that more of the time of the House should be devoted to debate, and less to practical purposes. He recollected that the practice of discussing petitions night after night led to the most objectionable postponement of legislation. He thought that they should look to the practical effect of the present system. As far as the Ministers of the Crown were concerned, he did not think that it could make much difference to them as to which system was adopted, beyond their having necessarily the desire to proceed to legislation. The House must, after all, strike a balance between the advantages and disadvantages of the two systems, and they should recollect that their time was the property of the people, and ought to be carefully devoted for the public benefit.

Mr. *Wakley* observed, that the increase in the number of petitions was no proof of the confidence of the people in that House; that increase could be more readily accounted for from the bad conduct of the House, and from the dissatisfaction which existed in the public mind as to their proceedings. The petitions had increased in consequence of that House acting in a way opposed to the public will, and to the best interests of the community. If the people had been satisfied, their petitions would not have been so numerous. With respect to an observation of the right hon. Baronet, he felt bound to say that he differed entirely from him, as he was convinced that no persons had such an interest in preventing discussion on the presentation of petitions as the Ministers of the Crown, and this was, above all, the case with the last Administration. The right hon. Gentleman also said that they should look to the practical effect of the present system. He was willing to do so, and he contended that it was altogether a mockery. He had seen thirty petitions presented by an hon. Member that evening, certainly all on the same subject, but the whole time occupied in their presentation did not exceed half a minute. Now when they took into consideration the trouble and expense that was attendant on getting up public meetings for the purpose of petitioning that House, and when they recollected that the results of these thirty public meetings had been disposed of in less than half a minute, he would ask whether the proceeding was not altogether farcical, and reflected on the character of the House? There was an excellent mode of diminishing the number of petitions which he could suggest to the House, namely, shortening the duration of Parliament. Unfortunately, at present, they had a lease of their seats for seven years, and the persons who had sent them to that House were compelled to petition, and pray them to alter their proceedings; and it would appear, that when the public came with their complaints, they were to be treated with neglect; and notwithstanding this, that assembly was called the House of the people. Now, what was the conduct of the other House with respect to petitions! The other House was an hereditary assembly, while that body pretended to represent the people. In the other House there was no check as to the mode of presenting petitions, but the fullest discussion was allowed, while in that House they were gagged and stopped if they endeavoured to make an observation on the prayer of the people. The right hon. Baronet said, that if a Member wished it, he could make a motion on any particular grievance, but he would ask whether it were not notorious, that a Member might place his notice of motion for week after week, or month after month, in the votes, without having an opportunity afforded him of bringing it forward? He recollected a remarkable case of the difference of the treatment of petitions between that and the other House. In one instance his hon. Friend, the Member for Westminster, presented a petition complaining of a great grievance, and he was obliged to confine himself merely to the statement of its prayer, and was not allowed to make any comment. On the same night a copy of that petition was presented by Lord Brougham to the other House, and the speech of the latter occupied three columns of the morning journals. If he was consulted, he would entreat the people to present their petitions to the other House, for in the House of Commons, their grievances were not listened to.

Sir *Walter James* would only take notice of one remark which had just fallen from the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Wakley). He had, indeed, stated several things in which he could not concur. He could agree with the hon. Member opposite, that that House ought to represent the people, and that they ought to study the wishes and interests of the people; it was their business to look after the people's interests, and the question now was, whether they were to conduct their affairs in a business-like way, or to delay their affairs in a tedious and vexatious way?

Sir *V. Blake* supported the motion of the hon. Member for Greenock. The ancient right of the people, relative to the presenting of petitions, had been curtailed in that House, and he thought there should be every reasonable licence for discussing them, on their presentation.

Mr. *Wallace* replied. In the years 1833, 1834, and 1835, when they debated on petitions as much as they thought proper, much more business had been got through than ever since. As to the remark of the right hon. Baronet, that the people felt there was sufficient debating, he quite agreed that debating the same point from day to day by adjournments, was much to be deprecated. If Members could not, when a question was brought in, sit there till next day, if it were necessary to bring it to a conclusion, as their forefathers had done, they ought to stay away from that House altogether. In the course of the coming discussion on the Corn-law, he had no doubt that the leaders, as they were called, on both sides of the House, had regularly arranged the debate, and that it was all settled that one should speak after the other; and the consequence would be, that next week would be occupied from Monday to Friday. As for the statement, that the more important petitions were printed for the information of the public, the House must remember that they were usually not printed till they were four weeks old, and if they were then presented to the fourth estate—the reporters in the gallery—they would not look at them. No; the public must have their news fresh; they must have their political food given them day by day, or not at all; they must have it hot and hot, or not at all. As to the objection of the hon. Baronet, the Member for Oxford, as to the time that would be occupied, he must say, that if an hon. Member could not say all that was necessary about a petition, in two minutes, he he should think his brains were not worth very much.

The House divided on the question, that the resolution be rescinded:—Ayes 50; Noes 237; Majority 187.

List of the AYES.

Armstrong, Sir A.
Bernal, R.
Blackstone, W B. S.
Blake, Sir V.
Bowring, Dr.
Chapman, W.
Cobden, R.
Collins, W.
Crawford, W. S.
D'Israeli, B.
Duncombe, T.
Esmonde, Sir T.
Ewart, W.
Ferguson, Col.
Fielden, J.
Hall, Sir B.
Harford, S.
Harris, J. Q.
Hatton, Capt. V.
Heathcoat, J.
Hill, Lord M.
Hindley, C.
Johnson, Gen.
Leader, J. T.
Mitcalfe, H.
Morris, D.
Mostyn, hon. E. L.
Muntz, G. F.
O'Connell, Dan.
O'Connell, M.
O'Connell M. J.
O'Connell, J.
Ogle, S. C. H.
Pechell, Capt.
Pinney, W.
Plumridge, Capt.
Powell, C.
Rennie, G.
Ricardo, J. L.
Roche, Sir D.
Strickland, Sir G.
Troubridge, Sir E. T.
Villiers, hon. C P.
Vivian, hon. Capt.
Wakley, T.
Wason, R.
Watson, W. H.
Wawn, J. T.
Williams, W.
Yorke, H. R.

TELLERS.

Wallace, R.
Roebuck,

List of the NOES.

Acland, Sir T. D.
A'Court, Capt.
Ackers, J.
Acton, Col.
Adderley, C. B.
Allix, J. P.
Antrobus, E.
Bailey, J. jun.
Baillie, Col.
Baillie, H. J.
Baird, W.
Balfour, J. M.
Baring, hon. W. B.
Baring, H. B.
Baring, rt. hon. F. T.
Barnard, E. G.
Baskerville, T. B. M.
Beckett, W.
Bell, M.
Benett, J.
Beresford, Capt.
Beresford, Major
Blakemore, R.
Bodkin, W. H.
Boldero, H. G.
Borthwick, P.
Botfield, B.
Bowes, J.
Bradshaw, J.
Bramston, T. W.
Broadley, H.
Broadwood, H.
Brodie, W. B.
Brotherton, J.
Browne, hon. W.
Brownrigg, J. S.
Bruce, Lord E.
Bruce, C. L. C.
Bryan, G.
Buck, L. W.
Buckley, E.
Buller, E.
Buller, Sir J. Y.
Busfield, W.
Campbell, Sir H.
Campbell, A.
Carnegie, hon. Capt.
Cartwright, W. R.
Chelsea, Viscount
Chetwode, Sir J.
Cholmondely, hon. H.
Christmas, W.
Christopher, R. A.
Clayton, Sir W. R.
Clerk, Sir G.
Clive, hon. R. H.
Cochrane, A.
Colborne, hn. W.N.R.

Collett, W. R.
Compton, H. C.
Conolly, Col.
Corry, right hon. H.
Cowper, hon. W. F.
Cresswell, B.
Cripps, W.
Crosse, T. B.
Dalrymple, Capt.
Damer, hon. Col.
Dawson, hon. T. V.
Denison, J. E.
Denison, E. B.
Dickinson, F. H.
Divett, E.
Dodd, G.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Drummond, H. H.
Duncan, G.
Duncombe, hon. O.
Dundas, D.
Easthope, Sir J.
Eaton, R. J.
Ebrington, Viscount
Egerton, Sir P.
Eliot, Lord
Elphinstone, H.
Emlyn, Viscount
Escott, B.
Ferrand, W. B.
Fitzroy, Capt.
Ffolliott, J.
Forbes, W.
Forman, T. S.
Fuller, A. E.
Gaskell, J. Milnes
Gill, T.
Gladstone, rt. hn. W. E.
Godson, R.
Gordon, hon. Capt.
Gordon, Lord F.
Gore, W. O.
Gore, Wm. O.
Goulburn, rt. hon. H.
Graham, rt. hn. Sir J.
Granger, T. C.
Grant, Sir A. C.
Greenall, P.
Greene, T.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Grimsditch, T.
Grimston, Viscount
Grogan, E.
Halford, H.
Hamilton, J.
Hamilton, W. J.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Harcourt, G. G.
Hardinge, rt. hn. Sir H.
Hardy, J.
Hastie, A.
Hawes, B.
Heathcote, Sir W.
Henley, J. W.
Herbert, hon. S.
Hill, Sir R.
Hodgson, F.
Hodgson, R.
Hogg, J. W.
Houldsworth, T.
Holmes, hn. W. A'Ct.
Hope, hon. C.
Hope, G. W.
Hornby, J.
Howard, hn. C. W. G.
Hughes, W. B.
James, Sir W. C.
Jermyn, Earl
Johnson, W. G.
Johnstone, A.
Johnstone, H.
Knatchbull, right hon. Sir E.
Knight, F. W.
Labouchere, rt. hn. H.
Lambton, H.
Larpent, Sir G. de H.
Lawson, A.
Legh, G. C.
Leicester, Earl of
Lennox, Lord A.
Liddell, hon. H. T.
Lincoln, Earl of
Lindsay, H. H.
Litton, E.
Loch, J.
Lockhart, W.
Lowther, J. H.
Lygon, hon. Gen.
Macaulay, rt. hn. T. B.
Mackenzie, T.
MacGeachy, F. A.
Mahon, Viscount
Mainwaring, T.
Manners, Lord C. S.
March, Earl of
Marsham, Viscount
Martyn, C. C.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Mitchell, T. A.
Morgan, O.
Munday, E. M.
Murray, C. R. S.
Napier, Sir C.
Neeld, J.
Neville, R.
Newry, Viscount
Nicholl, rt. hon. J.
Northland, Viscount
O'Brien, W. Smith
Paget, Lord A.
Pakington, J. S.
Peel, rt. hn. Sir R.
Peel, J.
Philips, M.
Pigot, Sir R.
Plumptre, J. P.
Pollock, Sir F.
Praed, W. T.
Pringle, A.
Protheroe, E.
Pusey, P.
Rashleigh, W.
Reade, W. M.
Repton, G. W. J.
Richards, R.
Rous, hon. Capt.
Rushbrooke, Col.
Russell, Lord J.
Sandon, Viscount
Scarlett, hon. R. C.
Shaw, right hon. F.
Sheppard, T.
Shirley, E. P.
Sibthorp, Col.
Smith, rt. hn. R. V.
Smythe, hon. G.
Smollett, A.
Somerset, Lord G.
Somerton, Viscount
Sotheron, T. H. S.
Stanley, Lord
Stansfield, W. R.
Strutt, E.
Stuart, H.
Sturt, H. C.
Sutton, hon. H. M.
Taylor, T. E.
Tennent, J. E.
Thompson, Mr. Ald.
Tollemache, J.
Towneley, J.
Trollope, Sir J.
Trotter, J.
Tufnell, H.
Vere, Sir C. B.
Verner, Col.
Vernon, G. H.
Villiers, Viscount
Vivian, hon. Major
Waddington. H, S.
Walker, R.
Wall, C. B.
Wood, Col. T.
Wortley, hon. J. S.
Wrightson, W. B.
Wyndham, Col.
Young, J.
Young, Sir W.

TELLERS.

Fremantle, Sir T.
Inglis, Sir H.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE—ATTENDANCE OF MEMBERS.] Sir *R. H. Inglis* moved the re-appointment of the select committee on the Library of the House.

Mr. *W. Williams* wished, in connexion with this motion, to call the attention of the House to a practice that had prevailed for some time past in regard to the formation of select committees, and which certainly required amendment. The name of the hon. Baronet, the Member for Oxford, appeared on two other committees besides the Library committee, the appointment of which was to be moved for this evening. Now, there was no Member of that House, whose services on a committee were more valuable than those of the hon. Baronet, but he could not overcome physical impossibilities, nor could he give a due attendance on three committees at the same time. The subjects to which those committees had to give their attention were most important ones, particularly that of the committee on public petitions, especially as by the division that had just taken place, the House had refused to allow Members to advocate the petitions of their constituents, but had referred them, as their alternative, to this committee, who were to select such petitions as they deemed important, and order them to be printed. With regard to the printing committee, as it was necessary that all published documents should be read by them, in order that no scandalous matter should be allowed therein, the subject of the constitution of that committee became of the more importance, in order to insure a due attention. The practice of nominating the same hon. Members on several committees, went very much against the attainment of this object. In the United States, a different course was pursued. In the House of Representatives ten committees, for so many different subjects, were appointed every Session, and to them every question requiring investigation was referred. Those committees were composed of indifferent persons taken generally from the House, and in no instance was any one Member nominated on two committees. The consequence was, that they were enabled to devote their entire time to the subjects placed before them. But the practice of this House was very different. If a committee was moved for by a member of the Government, it was usual for him to nominate Members of the Government upon it, or their immediate supporters, and a corresponding number of Members of similar standing on the other side of the House, so that a great many of the most important committees were confined to a comparatively few Members selected from both sides of the House. In the case of committees moved for by the individual Members, it was the practice for the mover to secure a majority of persons favourable to his views, and to select Members of the greatest ability to carry them out, the committees being completed with those on the other side also, who were most distinguished. The consequence of this was, that there was generally the least possible attention on the part of the Members of such committees. When they made reports, they had no weight with the House, and they had not the influence they ought to have, either in the House or in the country. Many such motions were merely idle, to gratify some crotchet on the part of the mover, and not with any sound object to justify them. He had seen great unfairness practised on committees thus constituted, with a majority of Members favourable to the purpose for which the committee had been appointed. When questions were put that might elicit answers unfavourable to that purpose, he had known the questions over-ruled by the majority. In all such cases, the mover having the majority on his side, was able to carry everything. Surely, if some other system than this were adopted, it would be more advantageous to the character of the House.

Sir *R. Inglis* said, perhaps he ought to apologise for not having prefaced his motion with any observation, but the fact was, that it had been usual to concur in that motion at the commencement of the Session without any discussion. It now, however, became his duty to offer a statement to the House. The observations of the hon. Member, however, applied more to the committees on petitions and on printing than to that which formed the subject of the present motion—indeed, with the exception of what the hon. Member had said on the subject of his (Sir R. Inglis's) name being on all of them, the whole of his observations had that application. But he hoped the House would excuse him if, instead of waiting till those other committees were moved in order to make his remarks, he at once proceeded to reply to the hon. Member. He would beg to remind the hon. Gentleman that the practice he complained of no longer existed. Twelve or fourteen years ago, it was the case; the names of certain Members appeared on almost every committee. The services of his right hon. Friend, at the head of the Treasury, in particular were deemed of such value, even for half an hour, that there was scarcely a committee, fifteen years ago, to which he was not nominated. There were also some other names not so well entitled to the distinctions which almost always appeared on those committees, which were frequently composed of as many members as forty-two or forty-five. He had not individually objected to the practice; on the contrary, he felt that there were several advantages in having the larger number; but on the attention of the House being called to it by the hon. Member for Dumfries, then the Member for Liverpool (Mr. Ewart), it was ordered that no committee should be composed of more than fifteen members, and that no member should be nominated until he had individually given his assent; and that practice had been adopted since: though, with respect to the Library Committee, the number had always been sixteen. With regard to this Library Committee, its functions were extremely limited. Want of room prevented their buying more books, and there was consequently little or no duty to be done. He had, however, thought it his duty to submit the motion, as being one of the usual Sessional orders. With regard to the Committee on Public Petitions, he had undertaken to move for its re-appointment in the absence of the hon. Member for

Kendal, who was the chairman of that committee. He could only assure the hon. Member that he would be quite contented to withdraw from that committee, and to move that the name of the hon. Member be substituted. He had little inclination for so laborious and uninviting a duty; but as he had served some years upon it, his name had again been included. The third notice on the paper—that for the appointment of the committee on Printing—he moved for his hon. Friend, the Secretary to the Treasury, who could best explain why the committee was so constituted. He believed that it was, unless perhaps with one exception, exactly the same as last Session. From that committee, also, he could assure the hon. Member, he would be quite willing to withdraw.

Dr. *Bowring* could not but attach very considerable importance to what had fallen from his hon. Friend the Member for Coventry. He was himself on the Public Petitions Committee for some time, and during that time scarcely more than two members ever attended upon it. The importance of this fact appeared to him to be much increased since they had been told, in the discussion which had just closed, that the petitions of the people received great attention from a committee specially appointed to take charge of them. Now, it had happened to him, time after time, to be the only member of that committee who had attended, and of so little importance did the business appear to be to others, that scarcely any member thought it worth his while to attend while the report was prepared, which was periodically laid before the House. The attendance on the Printing Committee, however, was much more regular, and scarcely any of the members were ever absent. He certainly thought that when committees of this kind were appointed, some pledges ought to be given by members that they would attend and discharge their duties.

Sir *R. Inglis*, in reference to the statement of the hon. Member, that the Public Petitions Committee was ill-attended, hoped he would not be misunderstood when he said that when he was chairman of that committee he certainly did not omit to read any petition that was referred to the committee. That was a most laborious undertaking, and one which he would not go through again. He had now ceased to do so for some time. He did not mean to say that where, perhaps, there were thirty or forty similar petitions on the same subject, and in the same form, such as sugar, slavery, or other subjects of that sort, he considered it necessary to read every one, but he read every one which was distinct and original.

Dr. *Bowring* did not mean to cast any personal reflection on the hon. Baronet, but he was sure he would not deny that the attendance had been very limited.

Mr. *Ewart* concurred in the views of the hon. Member for Coventry on this subject. There were two questions involved; first, whether it would not be better that these committees should be nominated by the Speaker or some other competent person having a full knowledge of who were the most proper Members to be selected, instead of continuing the present practice of allowing the committees to be nominated by the Member who would afterwards be chairman; and secondly, what should be the number of the Members composing them. He believed that the reduction from forty to fifteen, to which the hon. Baronet had, referred, had been found to work well and for his own part he was the advocate of the principle of still further diminution, conceiving that as you diminished the number you increased the utility and the individual responsibility. If the number were reduced to seven it would, in his opinion, be still better; and he wished the same principle were applied to committees on private bills.

Motion agreed to, and Committee appointed, consisting of the following hon. Members;—Sir R. H. Inglis, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir R. Peel, Lord J, Russell, Mr. Baring, Mr. W. Wynn, Mr. Rutherfurd, Mr. Shaw, Viscount Palmerston, Mr. Gladstone, Dr. Stock, Mr. Acland, Colonel Fox, Mr. G. Knight, Viscount Mahon, and Mr. Pendarves.

Committee on Petitions.] Sir *R. H. Inglis* moved, the re-appointment of the Select Committee on public petitions consisting of the following Members:—Mr. G. W. Wood, Sir E. Knatchbull, Mr. Greene, Mr. E. Buller, Mr. Brotherton, Mr. O. Stanley, Mr. Pusey, Mr. C. Howard, Mr. V. Stuart, Captain Jones, Lord Viscount Duncan, Sir C. Douglas, Lord Fitzalan, and Mr. Buckley. The hon. Gentleman added that he would however beg to withdraw his name, which had formerly been on the list, and to substitute that of Mr. Williams.

Mr. *Williams* assured the hon. Baronet that his remarks were not intended to apply to him personally. He (Mr. Williams) entertained a high respect for the hon. Gentleman individually; but he conceived it his duty to maintain the principle for which he had contended. He suggested that the hon. Baronet should permit his name to continue on the list of the committee.

Mr. *Wakley* hoped that the name of Mr. Williams would be retained on the committee, for he believed that hon. Gentleman would look after the Radical petitions. He had observed with deep regret that those petitions had not received that kind and generous treatment which had been exhibited towards other petitions. Upon looking over the names of the committee now proposed he thought the petitions to which he alluded were not likely to receive very favourable treatment.

Mr. *Roebuck* wished to say a word in explanation of his previous observations, lest it might be supposed he had advanced any incorrect statements when he asked the hon. Member for the University of Oxford, to act on Conservative principles. According to the rules respecting public petitions there were four separate stages in which they might be discussed; but when the Reformed Parliament met, those opportunities of discussion were rendered less available, particularly by the order of the 3rd of February, 1833, which directed, that petitions should be discussed only between the hours of 12 and 3 o'clock in the day. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth, was therefore in error, when he said, that it had anciently been the practice of the House not to allow discussion upon petitions. The hon. Baronet was, he believed, in Parliament when the celebrated question of the orders in Council was brought before the House, which was debated for six nights upon petition. He would assert—and he could appeal to the personal knowledge of many hon. Members to verify the fact—that fifty years back no question was proposed to the House, except that of adjournment, without debate; and certainly, for the last century or two, no less than four questions might be proposed to the House upon petitions on which they might be discussed.

Sir *R. Peel* said, the question was as to practice, not as to form. He had not spoken of the forms of the House; because, according to those forms, a debate might occur on a motion being made that the petition do lie on the Table. Any Member might avail himself of his privilege in that respect. He could state that the practice of Parliament thirty years ago was not to debate upon petitions; and it would be found from the records of the proceedings of the House that fifty years since there were few debates upon the presentation of petitions to Parliament.

Mr. *Williams* hoped that his name would be withdrawn from the committee, and replaced by that of the hon. Baronet (Sir R. Inglis),

Sir *R. Inglis* expressed his willingness to accede to the wish of the hon. Gentleman, and to allow his name to remain on the committee.

Motion agreed to. The names of Sir George Clerk, and Mr. Williams having been added.

PRINTING COMMITTEE.] Sir *G. Clerk* said, that great expense had formerly been incurred in printing documents which were laid before the House, and, in order to avoid any unnecessary expenditure in this respect, a committee had been appointed in whom was vested a discretionary power as to the printing of documents. The operation of that committee had been found most beneficial, and he begged to move its re-appointment.

The motion was agreed to, and the committee was appointed, to consist of the following Members:—Sir G. Clerk, Sir R. H. Inglis, Mr. Pusey, Mr. V. Smith, Mr. Strutt, Lord Mahon, Mr. Tufnell, and Mr. P. Stewart.

COPYRIGHT OF DESIGNS.] Mr. *Emerson Tennent* moved that the House do resolve itself into a committee of the whole House to take into consideration the laws affecting the Copyright of Designs for the ornament of articles of manufacture.

On the motion that the Speaker do leave the Chair.

Mr. *W. Williams* said, that having in the last Parliament opposed any alteration of the present law on this subject, he could not allow the bill to pass through its first stage without stating that he entertained as strong, if not stronger, objections to the proposed change in the law as he did when the question was formerly mooted. He believed if the hon. Mover had been throughly acquainted with the nature of the trade to which his bill referred, he would not have contemplated any alteration in the present law. Some of the leading persons connected with that trade had been Members of this House, but for a period of forty years no change had been made in the regulations affecting it. It was a remarkable circumstance that during the recent depression of almost every branch of trade in the country, this branch had been almost the only one in which the amount of trade during the past year had exceeded that of any preceding year, and yet the hon. Gentleman brought forward a proposition which struck at the very root of that trade. He was convinced that the result of the measure proposed by the hon. Gentleman—if it was carried out on the same principles on which his bill of last Session was founded—would be entirely to ruin this branch of manufacture as regarded the foreign trade.

House in Committee.

Mr. *Emerson Tennent* said, that the bill he now proposed was nearly similar to that which he submitted to the House during the last Session. He had, however, introduced one alteration. By the present measure he proposed to extend the right of copyright for a period of nine months, instead of twelve months—the term he formerly contemplated. The hon. Member observed, that as the discussion would be taken in a subsequent stage of the bill, he would now simply move that the chairman be instructed to move for leave to bring in a bill to amend the laws relating to the copyright of designs for the ornament of articles of manufacture.

An hon. *Member* asked whether any change had been made in those provisions of the bill which affected the registration of designs, with a view to protect manufacturers residing in distant parts of the country from those difficulties which would have attended the operation of the measure proposed last Session by the hon. Member for Belfast? If he rightly understood the former bill, there was to be only one office for registration in the United Kingdom. Those manufacturers, therefore, who resided near the office, would have the opportunity of making themselves acquainted with the patterns registered, an advantage which distant manufacturers could not possess without great difficulty and expense.

Dr. *Bowring* said, there were great imperfections in the legislation of this country for the protection of patterns in design. If that protection were desirable for the interest of manufactures and of commerce, the means of establishing the copyright should be easy, and of obtaining redress economical in cases of invasion. But there was no such machinery in this country for providing such facilities. One central office of registration was incompetent; it was inaccessible to the greatest portion of those who wanted its aid—and then if a pattern were printed, there was no redress but at an expense not worth the sacrifice. In France the *prud'hommes*, which existed in all the great manufacturing districts, had undertaken the business of registration, which they could accomplish at an exceedingly small cost, so that the groundwork of protection was there easily provided. In France, also, they had a great advantage, which was not possessed in this country, in being able to give effect to their legislation by a simple and appropriate tribunal, for the same body which recorded the primary claims of the inventor, ministered justice when the pattern was invaded, and the right of the manufacturer attacked. In this country the cost of obtaining redress was so great, that in ninety-nine cases out of 100, it was unavailable; for, where the property was small, the means of redress, to be beneficial, ought to be economical. There appeared to him, then, to be great difficulties in considering this question—first, in providing a means of general registration, which should be accessible to all who needed it; and, secondly, in providing an economical and prompt means of redress, in cases where an invention was invaded, it proved that none of our existing institutions were competent to effect the object desired—and there might be some doubt if the object itself was worthy of legislation.

Mr. *M. Philips* said, he had felt it his duty on a former occasion to offer an uncompromising opposition to the measure proposed by the hon. Member for Belfast; and time and reflection had convinced him of the policy of the course which he then pursued. He would not oppose the introduction of the present bill, because an opportunity would be afforded of discussing it on the second reading. He was, however, most anxious that the subject should be fairly and fully brought before the House.

Mr. *Tennent* was understood to say, that he did not conceive any inconvenience would arise from there being but one registrar of designs for the United Kingdom, and that he did not think any alteration in the bill in that respect was necessary. By the present bill, he proposed that in case of the invasion of a copyright of design, a remedy should be afforded by proceedings before two magistrates, which would render the expense comparatively trifling.

Resolution agreed to.

The House resumed—Resolution reported.

Bill ordered to be brought in, and it was accordingly brought in and read a first time.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, February 8, 1842.

MINUTES.] Bill. 1ª. Appropriation Acts (1841) Amendment.

Petitions presented. By Lord Brougham, from a congregation of Presbyterians in Dublin, and by Lord Stafford, from several places in the North of Ireland, for an Alteration in the Law of Marriage (Ireland).—By Lord Brougham, from Paisley, Coldstream, and eight other places in Scotland, by Viscount Melbourne, from Arbroath, by the Earl of Minto, from Falkirk, and by Earl Fitzwilliam, from Ludlow, Nottingham, and other places, for the Abolition of the Corn-laws.

CORN-LAWS—EDINBURGH CONFERENCE.] Lord *Brougham* begged to call the attention of their Lordships to a petition which he held in his hand, and which he considered of great importance, both by reason of the subject, and of the body from which it proceeded. It was a petition from the conference lately held at Edinburgh, and which, having sat for three days, came to a unanimous determination on the subject of the Corn-laws; that was, to petition for their total repeal. That conference, as perhaps was known to their Lordships, was composed of the ministers and elders of the various dissenting congregations throughout Scotland. He understood, that originally an intention was announced from 712 congregations to send delegates to Edinburgh, but instead of that number, there were more—instead of there being a falling-off in the body of delegates represented as was usual, it generally being the case on occasions where meetings were appointed, that more delegates, where such meetings consisted of them, were named as likely to attend, fewer than was stated appeared—but on the present occasion that was not the case, for instead of 712 delegates, 802 ministers, and members of congregations appeared. The conference assembled, as he had said, in Edinburgh; they met day after day successively for three days, and the number of persons who attended varied from 1,400 to 1,600 daily. The debate was carried on with the greatest possible order. In temper, manner, and tone, there was the utmost moderation. He would not trouble their Lordships with reading the petition, important as it was, for the arguments which it urged were the same as had often been urged in that House, and were familiar to their Lordships. The prayer was for a total repeal of the Corn-laws, and when he read their own words from the statement of the conference, published by their authority, it would be seen with what perfect impartiality they treated the plans both of the late Government and of the present, and their Lordships would see, that if any charge could be made against their proceedings, at least it could not be that of faction. They said, that they viewed with equal disapprobation both plans—both the sliding scale of Sir R. Peel, and the fixed duty of Lord John Russell. They passed an equal condemnation upon all projects for taxing the food of the people. They denounced such taxation as being against the principles of religion, contrary to the precepts of morality, and injurious to the best interests of society. He, however, must say, that he differed from the petitioners on the first two grounds on which they put their objections to the Corn-laws, and he agreed with the noble Viscount (Melbourne) that the question is not a religious one at all, or one of morality. He did not think, that morality or religion was peculiarly connected with this question, unless by a very strained construction. But he agreed with the conference in their last statement, that the Corn-laws were adverse to the best interests of society. Although this was a conference only from dissenting congregations, it was not to be inferred, that the congregations of the Established Church did not hold the same opinions. He was aware of no reason why a conference of dissenting ministers should be holden on this question more than on any other political question. He had stated, that he could not concur in the first two points of objection contained in the petition: nevertheless the petitioners had entrusted it to his hands, and had entrusted it to him he believed, after being aware in what respect he differed with them. He had never in any way placed upon exaggerated grounds his advocacy of the repeal of the Corn-laws. He had never held out the prospect of such a repeal very much lowering the price of bread and other provisions in this country. That it would lower them to a certain extent he had no doubt; that it would lower them to such an extent as had been stated by many advocates of the repeal, he did not believe. There could not be a greater error than those persons committed, who in their zeal allowed themselves to be led into exaggeration; it was a mode of diminishing, the effect of their own claims, and not of increasing it, to exaggerate the consequences of any abuse. It was like an unskilful person employing a magnifying glass, which might be so used as to diminish, instead of enlarging. There was, however, an undeniable truth in the arguments by which the objections to those laws were supported, and in the proposition, that the best interests of society required their total repeal. In that opinion, as he had already said, he entirely concurred. The noble and learned Lord presented the petition.

WOOLLEN MANUFACTURES–CORN-LAWS.] The Marquis of *Lansdowne* rose to present the petition of which he gave notice yesterday. The petition he was about to present, was from a body so respectable in their character and position in society, and at the same time so deeply interested in the present state of the commerce of this country,—unfortunate state, he was afraid he must call it—that certainly they had had peculiar reason for applying their most anxious consideration to that particular position, and for bringing their views upon that subject before their Lordships. The parties to this petition were the master woollen manufacturers of the West of England, chiefly situate in the counties of Gloucester, Somerset, and Wilts. Towards the close of last year, business in all those counties getting daily worse, upon a communication between the master manufacturers it was agreed that a conference should take place for the purpose of throwing light upon the subject, and ascertaining the opinions of the general body in that part of the country. A meeting was accordingly held at Bath, and, after exchanging communications, they came to certain resolutions, which were embodied in this petition. The petitioners in the first place, stated, that it was their opinion that there was a gradual decline in the woollen trade, which was fearfully destroying capital, neutralizing skill, and pauperising the working classes of society. They then proceeded to state that the evils they deplored were, in their opinion, principally, if not entirely, occasioned by partial legislation, founded on the principle of protection, and more especially by the unjust and oppressive effect of the corn and provision laws; and thirdly, they declared it to be their opinion that all restrictive and prohibitory duties interfering with the free exchange of commodities, and not levied solely for the purpose of revenue, were, in principle, erroneous and unjust, and in their effects prejudicial to all classes of the community; and they conclude by praying, and by stating it as their desire, that all duties intended for the British manufactures, should also be repealed. Upon each of these points, he should offer a very few observations. With respect to the first proposition, he was afraid it was one which admitted of no doubt; namely, the decline of the woollen trade. There had been, perhaps, too much declamation and loose assertion upon the subject of distress, true and unquestionable as it was, that it prevailed among the manufacturing population of this country. But, although he should not dwell upon any such general statement, and general declamation, it was as well to have recourse to facts which could be proved. Without troubling their Lordships with any details at length, he might state, with regard to that manufacture to which this petition alluded, that the following had been the state of it in some of the principal places in the West of England. In Bradford, there were, in the year 1820, nineteen master manufacturers, producing 620 pieces of cloth per week; in the last year, these nineteen had diminished to two, and the quantity of pieces produced was reduced to 100. Of the nineteen masters, nine had failed, five had declined business for want of success, three had gone into other establishments, and there remained two only. Unquestionably Bradford was, from its local circumstances, one of the places affected by the greatest suffering, but suffering was by no means confined to that place—it extended, in a greater or less degree, to all the towns engaged in the woollen manufacture. In Trowbridge, one-third only of the looms were now employed. In Frome, which was one of the principal towns in Somersetshire, and might be taken as a fair representative of the state of trade in that county, twenty years ago there were twenty-eight woollen manufactories; now only fifteen were employed, and these not wholly, five were only occasionally employed, five were entirely shut up, and three were converted to other purposes; and, from having altogether fifty establishments of cloth and kerseymere manufactures, making 300 pieces per week, there were now only fourteen establishments, making 150 pieces per week. So much for Somersetshire. As to Gloucestershire, it appeared from the reports the petitioners had been able to collect, that ten years ago there were 133 mills at work, but there were now seventy-seven only. In the year 1831 there were in Gloucester 1,083 looms at work, and now only 430; while in the county generally, in 1831, there were 3,200 looms, and now 1,530. He would not trouble their Lordships with details. He was sure he had stated enough to prove to their Lordships the rapid decline of the woollen manufacture; and that which must follow such a decline was, the increased misery of the people, increased Poor-rates, and a diminished consumption of agricultural produce in the neighbourhood of those towns. He had heard it said, and he had been led more to entertain that opinion himself than was perhaps justifiable on former occasions, that there was a disposition in the trade to quit that part of the country, and to take refuge, or rather to establish itself, in other and distant, and particularly in the more northern parts of England. But, upon a communication with these gentlemen, they stated to him (the Marquess of Lansdowne) that they acknowledge no ground whatever for trade removing itself from that district to another, they had advantages nearly similar of fuel and water carriage, and they appealed to that to which, unfortunately, they might appeal with great justice and confidence—to the fact that in the north of England, and even in Scotland itself, the same distress, and the same decline of trade prevailed. The petitioners proceeded to inform their Lordships that, upon consideration, they were of opinion, that the state of the Corn-law, if not wholly, was the principal cause of that decline. He, for one, was not prepared to state, that he considered the Corn-law as the sole cause of the decline of trade. He, perhaps, might not be disposed even to think that it was a cause to the same overwhelming degree that these petitioners considered it to be; but of this he was well convinced, that if there were other causes at work operating that declination, the state of the Corn-laws was that which interfered with all the natural remedies for a declining trade, and that the *vis medicatrix* which existed in all trades, and which was inherent in commerce, was by those laws deprived of its power, force, and efficiency, at the moment when that efficiency was most required. The petitioners stated to him a fact so strong, so simple, and so strikingly illustrative of this view of the subject, that he was induced to mention it to their Lordships. Some of the principal of these manufacturing establishments had consigned a considerable quantity of cloth to the United States. They sent these consignments upon limited credit, to be paid for at a fixed time, When that time arrived, the disorder of the monetary system in the United States was such, that it was impossible for the parties to effect a money payment, and the agents informed these gentlemen that the consignees could not give money for the goods, but they could procure and send corn. But such was the state of the Corn-law, such was the state of the averages at that time, and such the uncertainty which prevailed in the corn-trade, it was impossible for these persons to venture to take the corn, or to feel any sort of confidence that the corn, if taken, could be advantageously disposed of, and from that circumstance, the distress which prevailed was aggravated, and pauperism was increased. And such was the case among the 70,000 or 80,000 persons who were dependent upon these petitioners. It had been said, that one cause of the decline of trade in the West of England was the withdrawal of the orders by the East-India Company; but the article purchased by the East-India Company was principally manufactured in Devonshire; whereas this petition referred to the declining state of trade in the west of England generally, and was not confined to the particular species of manufacture which the East India Company used to buy. The third proposition which the petitioners took up certainly was one calculated to attract the attention of their Lordships. It was, perhaps, the first time—certainly it was a very remarkable and rare occurrence, as compared with petitions from manufacturers of former periods—that a body of manufacturers should petition their Lordships to repeal all prohibitory duties and all monopoly protections which were not intended to be levied for the purposes of revenue. This might, at least, be allowed to be a striking and unanswerable proof of the deep confidence which they felt in the truth of the allegations which they made. He trusted, indeed, that if any change was to take place in the law upon this subject. it would not be confined to the Corn-law, for he felt that the landed interest of this country, if a change did take place in that law, would be most cruelly and unjustly treated if they were not relieved from any monopoly in other quarters, from which they suffered, and if the great and abundant supplies which the markets of the world furnished were not left open to them, at a time when they were called upon, and justly called upon, to give up their own monopoly. It gave him great satisfaction that this petition, expressing the sentiments of these manufacturers, who were so deeply interested in the welfare of trade, was presented at a more auspicious moment than it could have been a short time ago. He perceived symptoms that the Corn-laws were about to follow the fate of the laws formerly affecting the woollen trade. Some people who once had held and vaunted the opinion that the Corn-laws were the bulwark of their prosperity, were now beginning to come round to the notion that they were not so absolutely indispensable; while others thought that almost any alteration of them would be for the benefit of the community. Some openly and avowedly held this doctrine, and others were silently giving way and abandoning a system to which they had long obstinately adhered. To what extent the intended alterations might go, he was not prepared to say, and future opportunities would occur for discussing the subject. Whatever duty might be allowed to remain, the petitioners hoped that if any it would be a fixed duty in order to avoid injurious fluctuations. The petition had been agreed to at a meeting of the manufacturers of Gloucester, Wilts, and Somersetshire, and only one or two persons dissented from its prayer.

On the question that the petition do lie upon the table,

Lord *Brougham* agreed that it was rare for persons engaged in manufactures to petition against anything like protecting duties; but there was one remarkable exception, and that was when he (Lord Brougham) laid upon the table a petition from persons authorised by all the great manufacturing bodies in the kingdom. They prayed the repeal of every duty levied under the pretence of protection. He perceived from the petition just presented that the petitioners were not in favour of a fixed duty on corn.

The Marquess of *Lansdowne* observed that the petitioners were opposed to any duty on corn but what might be necessary as a measure of revenue.

Lord *Brougham* said, that in that case the petitioners were for a direct bread-tax —a tax on bread for the sake of the revenue; on that point he was utterly at variance with them.

The Marquess of *Lansdowne* added, that the petitioners were for only such a duty on corn as was necessary for the purposes of revenue. They felt that the trade in corn ought not to be exempted from burdens to which other trades were liable.

Lord *Brougham* remarked, that though the petitioners did not call it a bread-tax, it was such, in fact, if preserved only for the sake of the revenue.

The Marquess of *Lansdowne* said, that they did not wish for any such duty, but that they were willing to submitt o it.

Lord *Ashburton* remarked, that the subjects introduced by the noble Marquess were so important that it was impossible to discuss them with all the advantage that became them on the mere presentation of a petition. The question of free trade (continued the noble Lord), the question whether any portion of the distress was owing to the Corn-laws, in part, as described by the petitioners; and the question whether any portion of it sprung from some derangement in the monetary system, would, each of them, probably be sufficient for the discussion of an evening. He could not, however, hear such statements as those made by the petitioners without entering his protest against the conclusions to which they had come. He entertained no doubt whatever of the existence of great distress prevailing among the woollen manufacturers; he had no doubt that it was severe among that class of persons; but he doubted whether there was not some exaggeration in the statement that the number of looms which had been employed in the particular district, being 3,000, had fallen off to 1,500, that being about one-half. If this were, however, so, it was pretty clear that such a declension must be owing to something more than the petitioners had described. There must be, he was induced to believe, something in the local position of those manufactories which placed them in a disadvantageous position. The decline, too, had not taken place suddenly, but somewhat gradually; and it was the nature of manufactures to undergo a change. It had been well observed on a former occasion, by a noble Viscount opposite, when distress was complained of as applying to a particular body of manufacturers—the noble Viscount said it was the penalty which was frequently paid for that species of wealth. It was the common course of things that one manufacturer in one place drove out another manufacturer in another. One district often superseded another in manufactures. Their Lordships heard of the distress of the manufacturing population one day, and the distress of the agricultural population another. He must protest, therefore, against the principle of one body of petitioners suggesting a remedy for their own relief, at the expense of other portions of the community. This was a species of doctrine to which he strongly objected, and he would urge their Lordships not to yield to it. As a general principle, change *per se* in the making of laws was a great evil. In saying this, however, he did not mean to say, that no change should take place; but then he would assert that no change in the laws affecting the interest of the great body of the people ought to be made, except under the conviction that such change was most desirable, and was a change for the better. The legislature ought not to be called upon to interfere to alter or vary the laws on light grounds, or because a partial evil existed, or because one branch of commerce was in a declining state. There was a good deal of fallacy often mixed up in these matters. One instance of a false conclusion the petitioners had fallen into he begged to remind their lordships of. It had been suggested as a remedy by the petitioners, that were the Corn-laws abolished they would be benefited in that way. It was stated, that owing to some derangement in the monetary system in the United States of America, and such a derangement no doubt had existed, the manufacturer in England would not be paid for the goods which he had sent thither. But, the correspondent added, that if there were a free trade in corn he would pay that way by sending corn instead of money. How was this to be accomplished he begged to inquire? Most likely the party who had made that assertion was engaged in the woollen trade in New York, or some other city, and of course he was not a dealer in corn. He must have his corn to buy, and, consequently, must pay for it in money. Now with that same money he might have paid for the manufactured goods. Surely, he might have remitted it to England. He must say he was surprised to find his noble Friend was to be deceived by a fallacy like this. He objected to discussions on such matters taking place night after night, because he was persuaded that they were calculated to mislead the country. He could not, however, hear such opinions as those broached by the petitioners without protesting against them. As regarded himself, their Lordships would not be troubled with any observations of his for some time to come. The petitioners seemed to think that the millennium of free trade was about to take place, but they would be disappointed. If the principles of free trade were, however, to be acted upon by all the world, he should be among the first to hail such a prospect. But this was far from being the case; for every year some exclusive system was brought to light as being acted upon, injurious to our commerce, by different countries. Indeed, scarcely a week passed but some part of the world displayed a determination to act upon the restrictive and condemned principles; therefore it was, that he denounced such notions as he had just adverted to. The principle against which he had entered his protest was this, that distress experienced in any one branch of trade, or even in agriculture itself, however important that interest, or however great the number of persons whose labour was absorbed in that pursuit, was no reason, and should be no reason, to induce the Ministry of the period to propose, or the Legislature to adopt, propositions which would upset and shake the whole commercial system of the nation.

Petition laid on the Table.

CATHOLIC PRIESTS IN MADRAS.] Lord *Clifford* rose to beg their Lordships to postpone till after the Easter recess a motion of which he had given notice to the House, on the 1st of October last, for the appointment of a Committee to inquire how far it was in the power of the Government and Council of Madras to afford protection to natives of this country and Hindostan, and to hear evidence on the subject, and report it to the House. The reason why he thought it necessary to bring that motion forward was, that the Governor-general of India had asked for the fullest information on every point to which he had referred, when speaking upon that subject on a former occasion. He understood, that a report had been sent to the presidency of Madras, stating what had taken place in that House, on the 23rd of September. His speech on that occasion lasted upwards of an hour, but did not occupy more than twenty lines of the columns of the newspapers. He had, therefore, thought it necessary to make a protest in the papers as to the report which had appeared on the 24th, relative to what he had said on the 23rd. If any of the reports which appeared in the public papers of the 24th, had been forwarded to India, those reports were only calculated to promote confusion: and the question on which he had addressed their Lordships was one of so great consequence, that it was absolutely necessary, that false reports should not go abroad. He would not now go further into the motion, which he wished their Lordships to postpone till after the recess, but would merely ask, whether any answer had been received at the Board of Control, with regard to the information which had been sent out relative to the correspondence between Lord William Bentinck and J. Manuel de Castro, the Governor of Goa? He was not disposed to condemn, upon such information as he had yet received on the subject, the conduct of Mr. Blackburn towards the Catholic subjects of Queen Victoria in Bengal, in refusing to allow them access to churches or chapels built with their own money and on their ground, except on the condition of assisting, in defiance of the prohibition of the head of the Catholic church, officially notified to them by their bishop, at divine service performed by clergymen who were not in communion with the see of Rome, on the ground, that in such conduct he was not borne out by the law of Madras, which did not recognize the decision of Sir Peter Grant, at Calcutta, that after the Order in Council of Lord William Bentinck, laid on the Table of the House, Oct. 4, 1841, no one could plead in court, as a Catholic priest, who was declared in court by the Catholic vicar apostolic, recognised by the Governor in Council, as sent by the Pope with the consent of the British Government to be superior of the Catholic missions in the Presidency, "with all the jurisdiction given him by the Pope," and admitted by the Governor in Council as beneficial to the interests of England. This was the statement to which he had drawn the attention of their Lordships on the 23rd of September last, making a motion at the same time for the production of certain papers; some of those papers were laid on the Table; others it was declared could not be found at the India House, which was the case with nearly all the papers relating to the subject. He repeated his motion on the 4th of October, and notwithstanding this declaration, the papers were produced. He entreated their Lordships, between the present time and the Easter recess, to direct their attention, in some degree, to the subject, which he considered as one of immense importance to the peace of India, and one on which he thought it most material, that no false reports should go abroad. He had thought it right to protest against what he had been made to say in the public papers, though he did not think himself called on to state what he did say on that occasion. When the aggrieved parties came forward, as they intended to do with a petition and address to her Majesty, and not till then, he should bring his motion forward. He had expected, that the address and petition would, by this time, have arrived in this country, but circumstances had occurred to prevent it; he expected both the petition and the address, however, would reach this country by the Easter recess, when they would be presented in due form. He was not authorised to state the precise terms in which they were couched, but there was one particular about them, which had pleased him much. In the address to the Queen, it was expressly stated, that if on examination it should be found, that any injury had been done to any one, it was the petitioners' first request, that no vindictive measures might be taken on their account against the persons who might have aggrieved them. They asked for tranquillity and security for the future, and not for vengeance for the past, which they utterly disclaim. He concluded by asking the noble Lord, the President of the Board of Control, if he had received any further communication on the subject?

Lord *Fitzgerald* would confine himself to answering the question put to him by the noble Lord. Their Lordships would not expect, nor would the noble Lord expect, that he should make any observations relative to the speech which he had addressed to their Lordships in September last, or in reference to any observations which he might make in respect of the committee to be moved for. He agreed with the noble Lord as to the importance of the subject, which, when it was brought forward, would, doubtless, receive that attention from their Lordships, which the noble Lord thought it entitled to. The noble Lord had yesterday mentioned to him, that he intended to ask a question on this subject, and he then told the noble Lord, that no answer had yet been received in reply to the inquiry made by Lord Ellenborough, at the period alluded to. He was not prepared to say, nor did he think, that any one was competent to give the information to the noble Lord, as to the nature of the inquiries directed to be made by Lord Ellenborough. Nor did he know how much or how little of the speech alluded to by the noble Lord had been communicated by Lord Ellenborough to the parties in India, to whom the interrogations were sent. This was what he had stated yesterday to the noble Lord; but to-day he observed in the mail that had been received from India, a private communication to Lord Ellenborough from Lord Auckland, in which it was stated, that the information he could give on the subject, was generally imperfect, and not very satisfactory. As soon as he could make himself master of the question, he would lay the information, such as it was, before their Lordships, but he was afraid it was not so satisfactory as it might have been, had more time been allowed for inquiry.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, February 8, 1842.

MINUTES.] Bills. 1°. Copyright Registration.—3°. and passed:—Appropriation Act (1841) Amendment.

Petitions presented. By Mr. Hindley, Mr. Barnard, Mr. Ricardo, Mr. Strutt, Mr. Wilson, Dr. Bowring, Mr. Brotherton, Lord Dalmeny, Mr. Ewart, and a number of other Members, from a great many places, for the Total Abolition of the Corn-laws.—By Mr. Compton, from Wymorney, and Porchester, against the Repeal of the Corn-laws.—By Captain Beresford, from Presbyterians of Ashline, and by Mr. Litton, from Presbyterians of Coleraine, for an Alteration of the Marriage Law (Ireland).—By Mr. Ferrand, from Keighly, and by Mr. T. Duncombe, from Lyndhurst, against the Poor-law.—By Mr. O'Brien, from Paisley, in favour of Emigration.—By Mr. Rennie, from Ship Builders of Ipswich, for an Equalization of the Timber Duties.—By Mr. T. Duncombe, from an individual, for improving the condition of the Working Classes.

MUNICIPAL LAW—(IRELAND).] Mr. *Powell* begged leave to ask the noble Secretary for Ireland whether it was in the contemplation of the Government to introduce a bill for the purpose of remedying the technical defects of the Irish Municipal Reform Act. These defects had been productive of great practical inconvenience.

Lord *Eliot* would take that opportunity of expressing a hope that any hon. Gentleman who might be desirous of putting questions to the Government of a nature similar to that which the hon. Member had asked would, in the first place, give previous notice of his intention. He did not wish to enter at that moment into the subject to which the hon. Member had alluded, and, as he had not the honour of a seat in the Cabinet, he was the less able to intimate the intention of her Majesty's Ministers. He was, however, convinced that if any practical grievances were pointed out, the Government would be anxious to apply a remedy as speedily as possible. As to the particular question which the hon. Gentleman had put to him, he was not aware that her Majesty's Ministers had any measure in contemplation on the subject.

Mr. *Powell* did not wish to press any question improperly upon the noble Lord. He would give notice, however, that he would to-morrow renew his question on this subject.

RAILWAYS—(IRELAND).] Mr. *French* wished to ask the noble Lord, the Secretary for Ireland, whether it were the intention of her Majesty's Government to introduce this Session any measure for the promotion of railroad communication in Ireland? And also, whether it were intended to introduce any measure for the better administration of medical charities in that country?

Lord *Eliot* said, in reply to the first question, that various propositions had been made on the subject by parties in Ireland; but he believed it was not the intention of Government to bring forward any measure on the subject of railroads in Ireland, the effect of which would be to involve any outlay of public money, or to entail on this country any pecuniary liability. In other respects, Government were willing, by every means in their power, to encourage railroad communications in Ireland by private enterprise. As to the second question of the hon. Member, a measure with reference to medical charities had been prepared, and would be brought forward hereafter. It was not in a sufficiently forward state, however, to be introduced immediately.

SLAVE TRADE TREATY.] Viscount *Palmerston* was desirous to ask a question of the right hon. Baronet opposite on a subject which had been mentioned in the Speech from the Throne — namely, the treaty between the five Powers for the suppression of the Slave Trade. In order that the House might properly comprehend the bearing of the question he would first state to the House the course of proceedings which led to that treaty. The treaty, as the House knew by the papers which had been laid before it, was the result of a conference held in December, 1838, at the Foreign-office, and which was assembled in order that the plenipotentiaries of France and England might propose to the plenipotentiaries of Austria, Russia, and Prussia the continuation of the negotiations for the suppression of the Slave-trade that had been begun at the Congress of Vienna. There was this remarkable circumstance in that conference, that whereas, at the Congress of Vienna, England stood almost alone in urging the other powers of Europe to take measures for that purpose, on this occasion, in December, 1838. France occupied the same honourable position which England had before occupied alone, and the proposal to enter into this treaty proceeded as much from France as from England, and the two countries were equally entitled to the honour of making the proposition. At that conference a draught of the treaty was proposed by the plenipotentiaries of France and England to the plenipotentiaries of the other powers. The other three plenipotentiaries said they would refer it to their respective courts for instructions; and the plenipotentiaries of France and England stated that they hoped that the detailed provisions of that draught would be found reconcileable with the rights and interests of the subjects of the other powers. Many communications passed on this subject, and towards the end of last summer the matter stood in this situation—the treaty had been agreed to by the three Powers, and nothing but the signatures and the arrangement of some matters of form were necessary to make it effectual. What he wished, then, to ask of the right hon. Baronet was, whether the treaty as it was concluded had been altered in any material respect from the draught as it stood at the period when the late Government left office; and he also wished to know whether the ratifications of any of the contracting parties had been received, and if so, whether they had been exchanged for the ratifications on the part of the British Crown? He might be allowed to say, that never perhaps did any of the five Powers conclude a treaty more honourable to themselves, or one which was founded on purer motives or more complete disinterestedness, than that to which he referred. If the right hon. Baronet thought that it would be inconvenient to answer these questions he would be satisfied with such an intimation.

Sir *R. Peel* observed, that he did not foresee any public inconvenience in replying to the questions which had been proposed by the noble Lord. He could fully confirm, if indeed any confirmation were necessary, the accuracy of the statement made by the noble Lord with respect to the circumstances under which this treaty was considered and signed. The invitation was addressed jointly by England and France to the three other powers, requesting them to join in an united effort for the purpose of suppressing that traffic which had been declared to be odious and infamous by the voice of this country. The treaty was signed by the five powers, subsequent to the appointment of the present Ministers. He was not, however, aware that any important alterations had been made in the treaty, as it was signed, from the treaty as it was originally agreed upon at an earlier period. There were, he believed, some modifications, but they were not of a nature that would at all justify him in characterising them as important. They were modifications intended to further the general objects of the treaty. The noble Lord's second question was, whether the ratifications of any of the contracting parties had been received, and whether they had been exchanged with those of this country. No such exchange of ratifications had taken place. The period allowed for the exchange of ratifications would not expire till the 20th of this month. He had, however, reason to believe that the ratifications of some of the contracting powers had been received in London; but, as the period allowed for the exchange would not terminate till the

20th of February, no surprise could be felt that the exchange had not yet taken place.

Convicts—Hulks.] Viscount *Mahon* wished to ask his right hon. Friend, the Secretary for the Home Department, whether it was his intention to act on the decision of that House, and to diminish the number of convicts permanently detained in the hulks at the different seaports in this country, although they had been sentenced to transportation? He wished to know whether his right hon. Friend in the administration of his department had endeavonred to diminish the number of convicts so detained at home, and to increase those sent abroad?

Sir *J. Graham* could assure his noble Friend that the Government had not lost sight of the decision to which the House had come last Session on the motion of his noble Friend. The Government were now endeavouring gradually, and he hoped successfully, to diminish the number of convicts detained at home. During the past year, 1,000 convicts had been sent to Gibraltar to labour at the repairs of that fortress; and his noble Friend at the head of the Admiralty was favourable to sending a number of convicts to the settlement of Gambier, in South Australia. During the next year, he believed the number of convicts at home would be diminished by 1,000 or 1,500.

Affghanistan and Cabul.] Mr. *H. Elphinstone* adverted to the very disastrous accounts that had just appeared in the public journals with respect to our warlike proceedings in Affghanistan and Cabul, and begged to ask the right hon. Baronet whether any further and official accounts of the alleged insurrection had been received by the Government?

Sir *R. Peel* answered, that despatches had been received; but, as they had only just reached his hands, he had not been able to inform himself of their contents.

Financial Statement.] Mr. *Barclay* begged to inquire of the right hon. Baronet when he would bring forward his financial statement.

Sir *R. Peel* said, it was his intention to develope his financial views with the least possible delay, but public convenience would compel him to postpone his statement for a short time. This postponement had no reference to personal convenience, but to the public interest alone. He should make his statement as soon as the immediate votes of supply were granted. After that step was taken, he should not lose a day. He was sure the hon. Gentleman would not wish him to make any partial disclosures.

West Indian Bishoprics.] Lord *Stanley* rose to move for leave to bring in a bill to amend the act 6 Geo. 4th., cap. 88, for making provision for the salaries of certain bishops, and other ecclesiastical dignitaries and ministers, in the diocese of Jamaica, and in the diocese of Barbadoes and the Leeward Islands, and to enable her Majesty to separate such diocese. He did not think that any objection would be raised to the introduction of the bill for leave to introduce which he now intended to move. It might be in the recollection of the House, that in the year 1825, a bill had been introduced, authorising the establishment of the bishoprics of Barbadoes and Jamaica, and assigning salaries to bishops and archdeacons respectively. Since then, he need hardly say, that from circumstances the labours of the clergy in our West Indian colonies, had increased to a great extent. It was one of the happy circumstances attendant on emancipation, that there had been of late an increasing desire for spiritual instruction. Churches and chapels had risen in every direction, and there had been an increasing desire to have the superintendence of the clergy. But of course this spread of religious feeling entailed increased duties on the superintendance of the Bishop of Jamaica, and on the Bishop of Barbadoes, whose diocese included all the Leeward Islands and Demerara, and which could not all be performed by him. At this moment the Bishop of Barbadoes had tendered the resignation of his see, and in conformity with the provisions of the act, 6th of George 4th, c. 88, by which, after ten years' service, the bishop was entitled to a retiring allowance. The Bishop of Barbadoes had now served sixteen years, and had laboured most zealously in his office. That Prelate now claimed the benefit of the act, and had placed his appointment at the disposalof her Majesty. He had felt that it was desirable, as the noble Lord who had preceded him in his office had done, to make more effectual provision for the discharge of the episcopal functions of that island; and he was happy to inform the House, that in accordance with an arrangement he had made, with the consent of the Archbishop here, and of the Bishop of Barbadoes, he proposed to subdivide that diocese into three dioceses instead of one, without involving any increased expenditure either to this country, or to any other party. The salary assigned to the Bishop of Barbadoes, and charged on the consolidated fund, was 4,000*l.* a year, with a retiring allowance of 1,000*l.* a-year. There were also two archdeacons, to whom salaries of 2,000*l.* a year each were assigned, though only 1,500*l.* a year each had been drawn, the rest having been contributed for a third archdeacon, who received 500*l.* additional from the colony of Demerara. This left a disposable amount of 8,500*l.* a year. Instead of giving to the Bishop of Barbadoes 4,000*l.* a year, and to each of the archdeacons 2,000*l.* a year, the intention of the bill which he was about to lay before the House was, to appoint three bishops, and to give to the first 2,500*l* a year, to the second 2,000*l.* a year, and to the third 1,500*l.* a year, with 500*l.* added by the colony of Demerara, and he proposed to assign to the three archdeacons the salary of 500*l.* a year each, instead of their present salary of 2,000*l.* a year, which appeared to him to be exorbitant. He proposed also to add two clergymen to the establishments in Trinidad, and at St. Kitt's, to perform the duties of rural deans; and the same amount of money which went to provide for one bishop, and three archdeacons, would go to provide the services of three bishops, three achdeacons, and two rural deans. He trusted that he had exhibited a proper regard for economy in this arrangement for subdividing the important functions performed by the bishop of the diocese, and obtaining an adequate superintendence in the episcopal government of these colonies. It was only due to the Bishop of Barbadoes to state, that although the pension for his services was not granted till his resignation was actually given, and though the resignatiou was tendered in August last, owing to a doubt as to the form of it, it had not yet been actually received; the bishop had said, though in form he was entitled to receive the salary of the bishopric, he was willing to receive the quarterly sum of 250*l.* alone, under the pension he had accepted, though this had not in form been confirmed upon him. He proposed to make similar arrangements with regard to the diocese of Jamaica. He proposed to take power to her Majesty, by letters patent, if she should so think fit, to appoint one or two or more dioceses in Jamaica, providing that the expense of two dioceses should not exceed the sum of 6,000*l.*, appropriated to the support of the present diocese. He did not anticipate any opposition to the proposition, and should conclude with moving for leave to bring in "a bill to amend the act 6th Geo. 4th., c. 88, for making provision for the salaries of certain bishops, and other ecclesiastical dignitaries and ministers in the diocese of Jamaica, and in the diocese of Barbadoes, and the Leeward Islands, aud to enable her Majesty to separate such diocese." Leave given.

Colonial Trade—Customs Duties.] On the motion of Mr. Gladstone, the House resolved itself into a Committee of the whole House on the Acts relative to the Customs Duties now levied on importations into the British Possessions in America and the Mauritius.

Mr. *Gladstone* said, in introducing to the notice of the Committee, or, he should rather have said, on re-introducing to the notice of the Committee a subject of considerable importance, it was a great satisfaction to him to think that he should not have to trouble them at any considerable length by the detail of the main grounds of the proposition which he had to make. It would be in the recollection of all those who heard him that the right hon. Gentleman opposite, the late President of the Board of Trade, had twelve months ago introduced a plan to the House for the purpose of relieving the American colonies from the weight of duties now levied on them under the authority of the Imperial Parliament; and it would be in the recollection of the House that the plan was generally welcomed by the House in its details. It would, therefore, be ill-judged in him to go over at any great length the details of a subject on which the right hon. Gentleman had then dilated with great ability, and in a manner superior to any to which he (Mr. Gladstone) could pretend. He should content himself with stating the general grounds of the bill, and referring to the main propositions which he intended to bring forward. That right hon. Gentleman had shown that the colonial system as it existed between this country and its dependencies was one of extreme strictness in a commercial sense. The relaxation of the late system had commenced sixty years ago, and since the peace in 1815 material changes had been effected in the policy of the commercial system of the colonies. In the year 1822, under the present Lord Ripon, then Mr. Robinson, and again in the year 1825, under the lamented Mr. Huskisson, measures were introduced into the British Parliament, the general effect of which was to substitute protective duties for the prohibitory duties before levied. Although this had been done, and although the result had been, so far as it went, satisfactory, and although the apprehensions of those who opposed that measure had been proved to be unfounded, yet the duties which were still leviable by authority of the Imperial Parliament were fixed at rates which could not be justified either with regard to the interests of the revenues of the colonies themselves, or with regard to the principles laid down by Parliament with respect to its colonial legislation; and in certain cases the operation of the system, as it at present stood on the statute-book, was extremely onerous. He did not think that, saving one or more exceptions, there were any hon. Members who were prepared to object to the statements of the right hon. Gentleman. But if there were alarm existing in any quarter on this subject, he must refer to an illustration which that right hon. Gentleman had used—to the example of our eastern colonies. While we had a system of severe taxation, and almost of prohibition, in our colonies in the West, the Crown, acting under the authority of Parliament, had applied to our eastern possessions, and to the mighty empire of India, principles completely different from those which had been applied to our colonies in the western hemisphere. He was not exactly aware whether the same line of policy was pursued in those countries under the rule of the East India Company, although he believed that such was the case; but he believed that there was not a single case with respect to our eastern colonies in which any differential duty amounting to more than 4, 5, 6, or 7 per cent. was levied for the purpose of protecting British manufactures. When they considered that this had long been the case, and when they considered that it was really impossible to say whether our trade with our eastern or with our western colonies was the most valuable to the mother country,—of such invaluable importance were both,—he thought it would be believed that he had stated sufficient to quell the apprehensions of those who considered it necessary, on account of British interests, that the present rate of duties should be levied in our Western possessions, and that they could not fail to arrive at the conviction that their apprehensions were altogether groundless. At the time when the right hon. Gentleman introduced his measure before Parliament last year, as it was a measure which referred to a great variety of interests, and to places situated at distances so remote, it was to be expected that some Gentlemen would feel that there was a difficulty in submitting propositions of a general nature to Parliament, intended to affect distant dependencies, without having some means of ascertaining how those provisions would be welcomed by the people of those dependencies. For that reason, he considered it a happy circumstance, that the measure had not passed into a law last year, because, from the time which had elapsed, the bearing of those measures had become known in our colonies, in the West Indies, and North America, and were generally approved of by their inhabitants. The right hon. Gentleman, in bringing forward the measure last year had said he brought it forward on its own merits, and on that ground he asked the sanction of the House, so far as regarded English interests, which might be supposed to be prejudicially affected by the measures proposed. The right hon. Gentleman himself, who was at that time at the head of the Board of Trade, and who had, consequently, the best opportunities of being acquainted with public feeling on the subject, had stated in a subsequent discussion, that the measure he had proposed, received a larger share of approbation from the general commercial interests of the country, than any measure that had ever been proposed. He was not going to dispute any of the principles which the right hon. Gentleman then propounded; but, on the contrary, to recommend to the committee the application to a somewhat larger extent, of certain of those principles. He thought, that the right hon. Gentleman had shown, by undeniable authority, that he was treading in the course which had been taken by those before him. The right hon. Gentleman had not trusted merely to speculative reasoning, he had been able to point to what had been already done in commercial relaxation; and, on those grounds, he also asked for the support of the House. He was further disposed to take this course, because he thought, that in the time which had elapsed since the plan of the right hon.

Gentleman had been laid on the Table of the House, no disposition had been shown shown in any quarter to anticipate injury either to British or colonial interests from any portion of that plan. Another reason had swayed his mind to ask the House to go even beyond the proposition of the right hon. Gentleman. If the condition of the West-Indian producer of sugar had been such, twelve months ago, as to render it desirable, that he should be relieved from the restrictions to which he was subjected, much more desirable was it, that he should be relieved at the present time; for although that House was naturally and properly disposed to distrust all complaints of commercial distress, yet there never was a more real or severe case of distress on the part of any producers of commodities for any British market than that now experienced—he would not say by the East-Indian planter, nor by the cultivator in the Mauritius,—but by the absentee proprietor of estates in the West Indies, a class that he admitted it was most desirable to diminish. Nothing could give the West Indies so fair a prospect of maintaining competition with other portions of the world (if they should ever be exposed to competition), as the transfer of the estates in those colonies from absentee proprietors to either resident proprietors or a resident tenantry. But, without going into these unnecessary details, he would only state, that the distress of the West-India proprietors was very severe, and that they they were subjected to restrictions in supplying themselves with necessary productions, to which other colonists were not subjected. It was most imperative on the House of Commons to afford every relief for the removal of those restrictions. The proposition which he was about to lay before the House was to simplify the existing laws in that respect. The 3rd and 4th of William 4th, c. 59, was, in point of fact, a simplification of previous laws on this subject; but there were, also, some previous laws on the statute-book, which had introduced some degree of complication into its application and practice; and he believed it would be a convenient course to all the parties concerned, if it were practicable to repeal the acts which had reference to this subject, and to substitute a single and consolidated act. Now, with respect to the changes he was about to propose. He would speak first of these changes which were new in their character, and which were not supported by the precedent of last year. He should propose to the committee to abolish all duties which were at present leviable in the colonies upon articles being the produce of Great Britain. The principal imposition of that kind at present existing was a duty on spirits, and he proposed its abolition, not because it was not desirable that spirits should be taxed, but because he confessed, that it appeared to him, that their taxation, under the authority of the Imperial Parliament, was not in itself necessary, and was scarcely compatible with the promises held out in the Declaration Act of 1778. In that act the Imperial Parliament gave a promise to the colonies that:—

> "The King and Parliament of Great Britain will not impose any duty, tax, or assessment whatever, payable in any of his Majesty's colonies, provinces, and plantations in North America or the West Indies, except only such duties as it may be expedient to impose for the regulation of commerce."

Now he did not think, that any duty which was imposed upon all articles alike in the colonies, or any duty imposed upon articles of British growth, could be fairly said to fall within the terms of a duty for the regulation of commerce. It appeared to him to belong to the class of revenue duties, and, as such, he must consider it to fall more properly under the cognizance of the colonies themselves. It was true, that with respect to Canada and Newfoundland, there were considerable sums at present levied by imperial taxation upon British goods and spirits; and, lest any inconvenience should arise from the sudden removal of those duties by the Imperial Parliament, he proposed to fix the day for the commencement of the operation of the act in North America at such a period, as should afford ample time for the adjustment of that subject, and as would enable the colonies to make such provisions in reference to it as might seem proper to themselves. He therefore asked the assent of the committee to this portion of the plan, on the ground, that it afforded them an opportunity, with practical convenience, of giving more full and striking application to a principle which they had long adopted—that of rendering to our colonial fellow-subjects another of those acts of goodwill to which alone he believed they were to look for cementing the connexion between the colonies and the mother country. There was another change in the present tenour of the law which he proposed to make, which was founded on the same principle.

It was to this effect: Under the existing law, certain articles not being the produce or growth of the United Kingdom are free, and all other unenumerated articles are subjected to a duty of 15 per cent. *ad valorem*. Now, it appeared to him, that with respect to foreign articles, which in no degree or manner competed with British productions, any taxation levied on them by the authority of the Imperial Parliament was strictly a taxation for revenue, and could not be called in any way a taxation for the regulation of commerce. There are a great multitude of those articles which appeared in the schedule of the present Possessions Act. Now, it appeared to him, that it would be the most convenient course for Parliament to pursue, and a course most likely to be satisfactory to the colonies, that it should, instead of taxing all articles whatever, not being of British growth, produce, or manufacture, on their introduction into the colonies, select such of them as it might deem necessary to tax for the regulation of commerce, and, that it should be provided, that the importation of all other articles into the British colonies should be left free, as far as respected the authority of the Imperial Parliament. He should also say, that there would be a necessity for naming a distant day upon which any act on this subject should come into operation—a necessity which he believed would be equally felt, even if the provisions which he had mentioned had not been introduced. Even at this moment hon. Gentlemen were aware, that the Customs' establishments in many of the colonies were a source of positive expense to this country, and he therefore took this opportunity of informing the committee, that it was the intention of the Board of Trade to call the attention of the other departments of the Government to this circumstance, and to the anomaly of having two sets of Custom-house officers in those colonies, to the waste of public money arising from the system, and to the necessity for an arrangement with a view to the consolidation of the establishment, and the consequent saving of expense. If the committee should approve of the general frame of the measure he proposed to introduce, he hoped it would also be possible to get rid of (with one exception) certain special exemptions from duties on imports into particular colonies which now appeared upon the statute-book. The necessity for those exemptions was in a great degree done away with by the removal generally (as he had already stated) of the corresponding duties from which they were exempted. The principal exemption he proposed to remove was the exemption from duty on corn, wheat, flour, and salt meat, on their importation into the Canadas. He believed it was in conformity with the desire of the people of Canada, that some tax of a moderate description should be imposed on the importation into that colony of American corn and flour. He believed, that on the American side of the border, a very considerable import tax, amounting to nearly 10*s*. per quarter, was levied on the produce of Canada entering the United States. Of course he did not intend to impose any such rate of duty—the duty he meant to propose would be 3*s*. per quarter. The view he thought on which provisions coming into Canada from the United States should be subject to a duty imposed by the authority of the Imperial Parliament was, in fact, that Canada sent to this country considerable quantities of grain and flour, and he was happy to say, Canada showed indications of sending over still greater quantities, so soon as her natural capabilities were developed by the fostering influence of peace and of wise local legislation. On this account the only articles to which he meant to apply the duty were those he had mentioned. The theory of the law was to afford an advantage to Canadian produce on being sent to the British market; and it seemed to him desirable that when this country sent forth thousands of Englishmen to North America as emigrants, the Imperial Legislature ought not to allow those who emigrated to, and became citizens of the United States, to put themselves in possession of a privilege intended only for British subjects—a privilege the American settlers could now acquire by sending their produce and provisions through Canada to this country. Those portions of the United States from which such produce proceeded were those bordering on the lakes, and the farmer there might make his produce appear in the British market as Canadian produce, by sending it through Canada, with as much convenience as he could transmit it to New York, or any other shipping port of the United States. Hence it was, that he proposed really to effect the distinction which Parliament had originally intended between Canadian and American produce. He would now state to the committee what were the resolutions which he intended to submit for their consideration. The first resolution was a resolution repealing all existing duties—the second went to impose new duties in their stead—the third and fourth provided that those duties should be in addition to the duty leviable under colonial enactments—the fifth regulated the exemption from duties of articles for the use of the British fisheries; the sixth gave, according to the provisions of the bill introduced last year by the right hon. Gentleman opposite, to the produce of the Channel Islands the same facilities as to the produce of Great Britain; and the seventh was a resolution declaring that it was expedient to bring in and pass a Consolidated Possessions Act. With respect to the article of wood, he thought, in the first place, it was unfortunate that the British colonies should be placed in the condition in which they stood, in consequence of having to pay a considerable impost on the importation of that raw material, which was so important, not only with a view to the comforts of the people, but to the encouragement of their industry. But, moreover, let him remind the committee that, in point of fact, the tax now levied in the West-Indian colonies on wood was a direct addition to the price which the British consumer now paid for sugar, and, therefore, the relief he in this respect proposed would be a relief more in favour of the British consumer than in favour of the West-India grower. From anything which had transpired since the proposition to reduce the duty on wood was first made, he did not think there was any reason to apprehend that the colonial interests would be affected even by the entire removal; and, as such was the case, he asked the committee with great confidence to consent to their removal altogether. He would now read to the committee the schedule, one of rated, and the other of *ad valorem* duties, which would be imposed by the resolution which he should have the honour of submitting to the committee. The first schedule was that of rated duties, and the first duty he imposed was on wheat (hitherto free), 3*s.* per quarter; next, wheat flour, 2*s.* per barrel, of 196lb; next, on fish, dried or salted, 2*s.* per cwt.; then upon fish pickled, 4*s.* per barrel, and salted meat, 3*s.* per cwt. All these duties were somewhat reduced below those fixed by the measure introduced by the right hon. Gentleman opposite last year. He next proposed to fix a duty on butter of 8*s.* per cwt., and on cheese of 5*s.* per cwt., and he did so in consequence of the fact that these commodities had become material articles of export from the North American colonies to this country. He ought also to mention that these rated duties were in a trifling degree higher than the duties which the right hon. Gentleman opposite had proposed last year. On coffee he proposed to fix a duty of 5*s.* per cwt., the same as was levied at present; on cocoa 3*s.* per cwt., at present it is 5*s.*; on molasses 3*s.* per cwt., the same as at present; and on unrefined sugar, 5*s.* per cwt., the same as at present. He then came to the article of tea, upon which he intended to fix a different duty from that proposed last year—that was to say, he intended to make it a differential duty, leviable in a similar way to that about to be levied on other articles. Unless tea was imported into the colonies direct from China, or from the United Kingdom, or from any other British possession, he proposed to lay a duty on that article of 1*d.* per pound. A point arose here which it was necessary for him to notice, in connexion with the discussion which last year had taken place on this subject. At present the importation of tea into Canada from the United States was prohibited, and the importation of tea into Canada in a legal way subjected that commodity at present to a duty of 3*d.* per pound. Now, the effect of removing the prohibition (which he had stated) without qualification would be, that tea imported into Canada would be liable to a duty of 4*d.* per pound, which would afford a high premium for smuggling. He thought last year it had been stated by the right hon. Gentleman opposite that it was computed that no less than three-fourths of the whole amount of tea consumed in Upper Canada was smuggled into that province, and, therefore, to make this particular provision apply to Upper Canada would rather aggravate than reduce the evil. He, therefore, proposed to provide for this case by a separate clause in the bill to be introduced, postponing the operation of that enactment until the Legislature of Canada should have had time to take the subject into consideration, and to lower the duty on tea legally imported now levied under colonial statutes. The next article with respect to which he proposed to legislate was that of spirits, and he proposed to leave the tax on foreign spirits precisely as it stood now—6*d.* per gallon on rum, and 1*s.* on other spirits. The effect of this would be to leave the whole question of the duty which ought to be levied on spirits entirely for the consideration of the provincial legislatures, instead of the present rather complicated manner, in which more than than one British duty was, under the Possessions Act, and by other anterior statutes, imposed. These were the whole of the rated duties which he proposed to submit to the consideration of the committee, and and he would now at once proceed to the schedule of *ad valorem* duties. Before he did so, he must, however, mention that he was not aware he had omitted any one article, to which a special rate of duty ought to be applied; but of course it would be competent to those who were disposed to claim the benefit of qualified and modified protection to British articles, to urge upon the Government those claims for the insertion of those particular articles in the schedule. The first article mentioned in the schedule of *ad valorem* duties was the article of sugar refined in bond in the United Kingdom, on which he proposed to fix the duty the same as now—viz. at 10 per cent. *ad valorem*, and upon other foreign refined sugar a duty (as at present) of 20 per cent. *ad valorem*. At present sugar refined in bond enjoyed an exemption from duty, while in the Canadas that exemption was defeated by the accidental structure of the law. The Canadian Legislature had levied a duty of 1*d*. per pound on all refined sugar, whatever might be the tax imposed by the Imperial Parliament. Now, the *ad valorem* duty of 20 per cent. would be equivalent to the duty of 1*d*. per pound, but still there was no provision in the act of the Imperial Parliament to the effect that the duty on foreign refined sugar should be in addition to the duty leviable on sugar refined in this country. The effect of this was, that it at present was a case of hardship upon the British refiners of sugar in bond. He should not feel justified in giving new advantages to the British refiners which they had not a fair right to enjoy, but it was perfectly evident that this preference was meant by the Legislature to apply to them, while in point of fact it did not so apply. He now came to a list of articles which would be specified in the second schedule, and upon which he proposed to fix an *ad valorem* duty of seven per cent.—the same as had been provided in the bill of last year. Those articles were as follows—wine, whether bottled or not, cotton manufactures, silk manufactures, linen manufactures, woollen manufactures, leather manufactures, glass manufactures, paper manufactures, hardware, clocks and watches, manufactured tobacco, soap, corks, cordage and oakum, pitch, tar, and turpentine. On all these articles he proposed to fix an *ad valorem* duty of seven per cent. There was one other class of articles, the produce of the North American colonies, with respect to which he intended to make a change. The articles of oil, blubber, furs, and skins, the produce of creatures living in the sea, were contained in the tables of the Prohibitory Act. He proposed to remove the prohibition with respect to those articles, and to substitute, in consideration of the value and importance of the fisheries, on maritime grounds, an *ad valorem* duty of fifteen per cent. He had now gone through the subject, and had only to apologise for the inefficient manner in which he had introduced it to the committee. He entertained hopes that no topic connected with the subject could be open to serious dispute, and he was confident that the measure he had to introduce would be hailed by the colonies as a measure of goodwill on the part of the Imperial Parliament, and, therefore, both on commercial and national grounds, he ventured to recommend it to the favourable consideration of the committee. With these observations, he would put the first resolution in the hands of the Chairman.

The Chairman put the resolution as follows:—

"That from and after a day or days to be named, the duties chargeable upon goods, wares, or merchandize, imported or brought into any of the British possessions in America, or the Mauritius, under or by virtue of the following Acts respectively, namely: Act 4 Geo. 3, c. 15, imposing certain duties on wines imported into the British possessions in America; Act 6 Geo. 3, c. 52, imposing certain duties on molasses, syrups, and pimento, imported into the British possessions in America; Act 14 Geo. 3, c. 88, imposing certain duties on spirits imported into Canada; Act 3 & 4 Will. 4, c. 59, for regulating the trade of the British possessions abroad, shall cease and be repealed."

Mr. *Labouchere* said, he had listened to the statements made by the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down with great, and he might add, with almost unalloyed satisfaction. The bill which was now about to be introduced, was founded on the same principles as the measure which he had had the honour of proposing in the last Session of Parliament. And he could assure the right hon. Gentleman who had just spoken, that though he had not had the good fortune to bring the measure he had submitted to Parliament to a successful termination, still he retained for it the solicitude and affection of a parent, and any humble assistance he could render would be cheerfully given to the right hon. Gentleman opposite to pass the present proposed measure into a law. He was free to confess that, so far as he had been able to follow the right hon. Gentleman through his statement, the alterations which he had made, upon the proposition he had made last year, were improvements. The time which had since elapsed had, of course, enabled the right hon. Gentleman to make them; but, at the same time, he must reserve his opinion upon some of those alterations until he saw them in print, and had an opportunity of considering them. At present, he believed, he repeated, the proposed alterations to be improvements. The most important of the alterations seemed to him to be the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman with regard to the flour of the United States imported across the border. He trusted there was no intention on the part of the right hon. Gentleman to ask Parliament to interfere to prevent the free importation from the United States into Canada of wheat and flour, unless the Canadian Legislature should order otherwise. It was unnecessary for him to enter at any length on this subject. He retained the opinions he had urged in the last Parliament, and he considered the proposed measure as of the utmost importance—as a measure of justice to the colonies. He continued also in the opinion quoted tonight, that let Parliament take what course it liked, with regard to other alterations in our Tariff, after the advantages it had bestowed upon the East Indies, it was but an act of common justice now to relieve the West Indies from those burthens to which under Parliamentary enactments they were now subject, and to which the Crown had never exposed the East Indies or Australia. He repeated, that he retained this opinion, but at the same time he rejoiced to see this measure again brought forward, because he could not disguise from himself that it would greatly advance those important reforms with regard to the duties levied on colonial produce in this country, especially sugar and coffee, which the people demanded, and which the proposition of the right hon. Gentleman, as it seemed to him, would greatly facilitate. He trusted that the House might take this measure as a harbinger and omen, that as the present Government had now shown that on deliberation they were prepared to adopt the opinions of the late advisers of the Crown with respect to these duties—that having now done justice to the people of the colonies, they would proceed to do justice to the people of this country, and modify those duties on colonial produce which weighed so heavily on the people of this country. As an opportunity would occur in future for discussing the measure, after time for deliberation, he did not know that he need at present trespass further on the attention of the House. He thought the principles of the right hon. Gentleman's plan sound and just, and he heartily hoped that no opposition would be offered to those principles. If any opposition should be offered from any quarter any humble assistance in his power to give, the right hon. Gentleman might rely upon it should be freely given to overcome that opposition.

Mr. *G. Palmer* desired not to be supposed to have made any change in his opinions in consequence of having changed his side of the House, and he hoped that those who now hailed this measure would well consider the consequences which were likely to ensue from it. Seeing that it was the very same measure as that which the right hon. Gentleman opposite had last year brought forward he could not, as at present advised, give it his approval.

Lord *J. Russell* said, that although upon the whole he was quite well pleased with the measure now brought forward, he certainly should not think it necessary to defend the Government against their own supporters were there not one point on which this measure differed materially from that proposed by the late Government last year, and which he thought it very material should be fully considered. At present there was a free trade between Canada and America. That was much objected to by the agricultural party in Canada. Now he, both as to Canada and as to this country, thought that free admission of flour was a very great benefit. But there was now an agricultural and landed interest in Upper Canada, which could state the same kind of burthens and the same kind of prescription for a number of years with the agricultural and landed class in this country as reasons against any interference with them. But if this country imposed restrictions on the introduction into Canada of flour from the United States, he was of opinion that the consequence would be the formation, in Canada, of a body favourable to free trade, which did not exist there at present, and which it might be found very difficult to meet with, encounter, and overcome. He knew that it might be said that flour so imported into Canada might come to this country, but he saw no great evil in that. On the other hand he thought that if the Canadian Legislature were to impose duties, it was probable that they would not find them effectual, because the province was so large that it would be very difficult to distinguish Canadian flour from that of the United States. What the right hon. Gentleman had stated on this point seemed to him as the right hon. Gentleman had stated it, to tend to establish a monopoly, which he should be very sorry to see established, and he hoped, therefore, that it would be maturely weighed before proceeding further. With respect to other parts of the measure, he was very glad to see that the objections which had been made last year by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Goulburn), the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, to this measure, as proposed by the late Government, and which he urged so forcibly and with so much effect, had been removed.

Sir *C. Douglas* objected to the statement made by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Labouchere), that hon. Members of Conservative opinions were now supporting a measure which they last year opposed. To prove that such was not the case, he begged to read the following passage from a speech delivered by Mr. Herries, on the 5th of April, 1841, in the Committee on Mr. Labouchere's resolutions, modifying the colonial duties :

> "There was no individual on either side desirous to keep up a rate of duty in any case for the sake of protection beyond what was indispensably necessary ; and the object of all parties was to reduce protection to the lowest point. If the right hon. Gentleman proceeded upon that principle (and he trusted he would) he might be assured of receiving as hearty support from that (the opposition) side of the House as from the other, as nothing could be more in conformity with the opinion of those who trod in the steps of Mr. Huskisson."

This being the avowal which had been made on the part of his hon. Friends when in opposition, he did not think it came well from the noble Lord that he should taunt them, as he had done, for adopting the measure of the late Ministry.

Sir *R. Peel* entreated the House not to adopt any inference as to the future course of her Majesty's Government in consequence of the introduction of the present measure, but that it would wait until he should have an opportunity of explaining fully the intentions and propositions of the Government. He stated publicly in his place last year that notwithstanding the differences which existed between those who sat on the side of the House from which he spoke and her Majesty's then Government as to questions of commercial policy, he should give the measure introduced by the right hon. Member for Taunton his cordial support. The right hon. Gentleman, on the introduction of his bill, said, that he brought it forward as a claim of justice to the colonies, and for the protection of the commercial interests of the West Indies. He stated that there was no correspondent claim on the part of the East Indies ; for, while they had admitted the produce of the East Indies to compete with that of the West Indies, they had not removed the peculiar burdens which pressed on the latter colonies ; he therefore asked the House to put them on the same footing. The claim of the right hon. Gentleman was, that the measure should pass solely as one of justice, and independent of all other considerations ; and he (Sir R. Peel) supported it on that ground, and should have continued to support it, if the right hon. Gentleman had proceeded with his bill on the simple grounds of its justice and its abstract merits. He trusted that the House would not attempt to draw inferences with respect to the other portions of the commercial policy of the Government from this measure, but that it would wait until the other measures were brought forward. He should to-morrow introduce one of the most important of them, and he would take the earliest opportunity of pursuing the same course with respect to others. He trusted that the harmony which had hitherto prevailed with respect to this subject would not be disturbed. He would only add, that he did not think that the noble Lord would taunt him with adopting all his views and measures when he had heard his propositions to relieve the country from the great financial embarrassments under which it now laboured.

Mr. *Stuart Wortley* wished that some further information should be furnished to the House with respect to the importation of corn and flour from the United States into Canada. He understood that at present there was a duty of twenty-five per cent. levied in the United States on the importation of foreign corn, but there was no duty whatever on the importation of corn from the United States into Canada. At present this country, with the view of benefitting our colonies, admitted corn from thence at a duty of 5*s.* the quarter; but, by the present anomalous state of the law, the country gave the advantage of this privilege to the United States. He thought, therefore, that if ever there was a fair case for reciprocal restriction, this was it. As he understood the right hon. Gentleman, his proposition was to propose a duty of three shillings a quarter on corn and two shillings a barrel on flour introduced into Canada from the United States. He thought that this duty should be higher. He did not wish to increase the duty to an unnecessary extent, but they ought to take care that the object was fulfilled of putting an end to an illicit trade.

The Chairman to report progress.

The House resumed. Committee to sit again.

Railroads.] Mr. *Gladstone* rose to ask leave to bring in a bill for the better regulation of Railroads. About twelve months ago the late Government proposed to the House to sanction a measure which gave a very large amount of discretionary power in the management of railroads to the Government. This was deemed necessary for the safety of the public in the minds of many persons, in consequence of the numerous accidents which occurred in the course of the autumn of 1840 on several railroads. The bill, after having been submitted to the House, was referred to a committee up stairs, and it was the opinion of that committee, after mature deliberation, that, on the whole, the power hitherto entrusted to the Board of Trade had worked well; and that, as long as this continued to be the case, it was advisable not to place in the hands of the executive Government a control over the management of railroads. The proceedings since last year had shown that the committee was right in the opinion which it had formed, for he thought that it would be generally admitted, that there had been a great improvement in the management of railroads. [Col. *Sibthorp:* Hear.] Probably his gallant Friend entertained a different opinion, and, no doubt, the House would hear the gallant Member endeavour to show that matters had been growing worse and worse, but he entertained a widely different opinion. He therefore did not intend to propose to place any general powers in the hands of the Government as respected railroads. Last year an important suggestion was made by an hon. Gentleman opposite, with the view to the prevention of accidents on railroads—namely, it should be necessary that all engine drivers on railroads should be licensed. The opinion of the committee, however, was rather against this proposition; and such was also the opinion of the present Board of Trade, after the most mature deliberation, who conceived that greater care and security would be produced by the operation of public opinion on the directors of the several railroads. If this should be found to be insufficient for the public safety, then it would be the duty of Parliament to interfere, and pass such enactments as might be deemed necessary. It appeared also to be the opinion of the committee that if the Government gave licences to the engine drivers, it would lessen the responsibility of the directors of railroads, and would not ensure the public against misconduct or neglect on the part of the engine drivers. The question also was, whether the character and conduct of engine drivers had improved or not. He thought that the diminution in the number of accidents last year on railroads showed a great improvement in the conduct of the engine drivers. There would be a report laid on the table of the House in the course of a few days, drawn up by the officers of the Board of Trade belonging to the railroad department, and which would show that very few of the serious accidents which had occurred last year on railroads were traceable or attributable to the misconduct of engine drivers, or to the want of caution. He thought, therefore, when it appeared that a great improvement had already taken place in this particular, and also that it was probable that greater improvement would occur with additional experience on the part of the engine drivers, that it would be better not to interfere, although it would be the duty of the Government to take the sense of the House upon the subject and to act accordingly.

He repeated, then, that in consequence of the improved character of the proceedings of last year in this respect, he did not intend to propose any alteration at present. The bill which he intended to propose contained provisions which tended somewhat to enlarge the powers of the Board of Trade, but only on specific points where experience showed that they were called for. He would proceed to describe to the House the most important clauses in the bill. The first was a clause for the more effectual inspection of railroads previous to their opening, and to give powers to the Board of Trade, to postpone the opening of a railroad, in case of the proper officers not being satisfied of its security. In most cases there was little difficulty in this respect, for the directors of most of the railroads readily attended to the opinions of the surveying officers. If his hon. and gallant Friend would attend to this part of the subject, he would find, that all the blame of the accidents that had occurred was not to be attributed to the railroad companies, for in most cases the directors most readily listened to the suggestions and advice of their surveyors. One of the chief dangers attending the traffic on new railroads arose from the unsettled condition of the soil, and a disposition on the part of railway companies to open their lines before the ground was in a proper state to allow of that being done with safety: it was therefore his intention to propose, that the Board of Trade should be authorised to postpone the opening of railroads when they saw occasion. He intended to propose also to enlarge the power of the Board of Trade as to returns in cases of accident on the railroads. At present such returns were required only when injury to life or limb had occurred, but it was obvious that great negligence might be practised, without causing such an injury: his object, therefore, was to adopt measures which would ensure the obtaining information respecting such cases, and he intended to propose, that it should be incumbent on the directors of railroads, to make a return of all accidents that occurred, whether formidable or not in their nature. He also intended to propose, that in cases where roads crossed the railroad on the line, the gates should be closed across the roads, and not across the railroads. In most of the railway acts it was directed, that the gates should be not across the road, but across the railroad; but experience had proved, that this was not the best course; he, therefore, proposed a clause which would lead to the opposite practice. Another clause would require occupation-gates on railways to be kept locked. There were a vast number of these gates on every line, and it was out of the question, that the railway companies could watch all these gates. Great inconvenience and some accidents arose from their being left open, and cattle getting on the line. He thought, therefore, they ought to be required to be kept locked. He would ask, in another clause, for power to require disputes to be settled by arbitration. Cases of disputes, as with regard to crossings on the level, matters of extreme importance, were frequently arising between railway companies and road trustees, where they could not agree on the conditions of the crossing, or whether a road was to be carried under or over the railway. It was obviously exceedingly inexpedient, that because parties chose to stickle upon some minor conditions, the safety of the public should be exposed to serious damage. He should, therefore, ask for power to require arbitration in such cases; and, if necessary, an umpire to be appointed to ensure a speedy decision. He should propose the adoption of a similar principle with respect to branch communications. A right had been given in certain cases, under railway acts, to introduce branch communications, in order to secure to individuals the use of the way. This power, he believed, had not been used to any material extent. It was clear, that if it had been, it would lead to a frightful multiplication of accidents, and it was desirable, that it should be under control; he should ask the House to give the Government power to increase such control. He should also ask for some power with reference to the right of private parties to use locomotive engines on railways. Stipulations of this sort had been introduced into railway acts antecedently to experience; but experience showed, that they required to be placed under control. There were certain other clauses, by which he proposed to give to railway companies powers of a compulsory nature, which they did not now enjoy. There was one in reference to the public safety. It happened, in certain instances, that cuttings were found too steep, and embankments too narrow for security, either ordinarily or from bad weather. In such cases, the companies should be empowered to take land enough to widen the embankment, and diminish the slope sufficiently to make it secure. In doing so, it was not right, that they should be impeded in the accomplishment of their object; he meant, that in such cases the rights of property should be subjected to modification, if it was clearly made out, that the taking of certain lands was necessary for the public safety. There were some other clauses to make provision for certain cases of misconduct on railways, but without further detail he should now move for leave to bring in the bill.

Colonel *Sibthorp* was glad the hon. Gentleman had adopted the course which he formerly had the pleasure of suggesting, and that it was placed in such able hands. He was actuated by but one motive in that opposition which he had always given to the introduction of railway schemes, and if accidents increased, as they had done latterly, he could have wished that his hon. Friend had introduced a bill for the annihilation of railways. But when the hon. Gentleman told them, with regard to the measures which he proposed for the consideration of the House, that great discretionary powers were to be given to the Government, it appeared to him that little public good would result from it in regard to the lamentable accidents and loss of life which had of late occurred; and if the hon. Gentleman should not do so, he would take the liberty of moving for a return of those accidents, and of the opinions of the juries on the various cases. He thought, too, that sufficient had fallen from the public press on this subject, and he alluded in particular to one paper, from which he differed in political matters—he alluded to *The Sun*, the comments of which on the unfortunate accidents which occurred, were of the most salutary kind, and whose efforts in urging that some efficient measure should be adopted to prevent them, conferred great credit on itself. He thought that most of those accidents occurred from want of due precaution on the part of the directors, and he would be glad that a measure was brought forward for settling a greater responsibility on them. He thought it was necessary that such a course of inspection as was mentioned should be adopted, not only with regard to new railways, but regarding all railways. He thought that imposing a mere deodand, even of 1000*l.*, was not a sufficient recompense to the relatives of the sufferers. The directors of those schemes should be compelled to support the families of those who were killed. He was also of opinion that the losses sustained by the proprietors of stage-coaches should be made a subject of consideration by her Majesty's Ministers. He thought that railroads were a proper subject taxation; they would produce a revenue to the Government, and would not affect the body of the people. He had been conscientiously opposed to the introduction of all railroads, but with regard to this bill, it certainly did not seem to him to be adequate to the protection of the people. It was due to the public at large, and to individuals, that life and property should be protected, and he should take the opportunity of opposing certain parts of this bill at every stage.

Mr. *Wakley* felt bound to express his belief that this bill as at present constructed would not carry out the object the right hon. Gentleman had in view. He was decidedly impressed with the opinion that a far more stringent measure was necessary, but he felt also compelled to state his fear that the influence of the proprietors of railways in that House was far too great to allow of any hope that such a bill could at present pass. By and by, when three or four lords had lost their lives, or perhaps some members of the Government, the House would strongly sympathize with the subject, and some efficient remedy would be provided for the prevention of accidents in future; but, until some such event occurred, he was convinced that the House would not pass the kind of law which the circumstances of the case demanded. One hon. Member opposite had himself had his life in jeopardy, and he would probably give the House an account of the circumstances attending the accident on the Brighton line. Some of the cases that had occurred having come officially under his notice, he had had the fullest opportunity of investigating the facts and comparing the evidence, and he had come to this conclusion —that railway travelling, if it were under proper regulation, would be the safest in the kingdom. He entertained no doubt upon the subject, not the slightest. This bill of the right hon. Gentleman was another which Ministers had brought out of the back shop of the Whig store. They had had four already. He wished the Government would take the whole batch, ticket them "Whig bills," and let them know which they meant to stick to. It was not long since he had heard the Whig measures described as the most vicious and most rascally that had ever been exhibited to an intelligent assembly; they had been denounced in that House and in the country. But now, when questions were put to the Government from that (the Opposition) side on their measures, the answer was "Oh! *I* found a bill in my office" (a sort of legacy of the noble lord), "and, with slight modifications, I intend to introduce it the first opportunity." That had been done with regard to the all-important question of the factories, and also with regard to the poor-law, though that was not to come on till after Easter—a circumstance which, as the commission expired in July, appeared rather strange. He did not like these tactics. To-night, another bill had been proposed by the right hon, mover of the present measure, for the regulation of the customs of the West-India Islands, and there had been no end to the compliments he paid to the late President of the Board of Trade. He had not heard those compliments paid formerly. But it was astonishing how well those who had obtained the victory could afford to be complimentary. This bill was inefficient last year, and he had felt so: it was equally inefficient now. A stringent hand must be applied to the railway proprietors. The director and chairman of one of the great companies was now in the House, and it might be that he had some influence in the right quarter. It happened to him the day before Christmas-day to be on the Great Western Railway, a few hours after the accident that happened at Sonning-hill. He was in the third train. It would be useless for him to describe the feelings of the people, nor need he advert to the distressing, painful, agonizing character of the accident—not less distressing because he knew that every person on the spot concurred in thinking that, had the commonest precaution been used, such an accident could not have occurred. Would it be believed, that on that night, in the darkness, there was no watchman at the cutting at Sonning-hill? He made this statement upon the allegation of persons who were on the spot. And on the statement of the secretary of the company when examined on the inquest. The evidence of the policeman was that it was his duty to be there in time for the train which leaves London at six. But there was another train—a "luggage" train—which left London at half-past four. It was that containing the trucks that held the unfortunate men whose lives were lost. That train was at the place before the watchman arrived, for it was not a part of his duty to be there till day-light. Was this a system that ought to be sanctioned? Railways were a great national undertaking, conducive to commercial advancement, and adding greatly to the convenience of the public; and those who thought they ought to be placed under proper regulations should not object to have a regulating power placed in proper hands. They should not be the parties interested in railways; there ought to be a power above them, and that power ought to be the Government. Then, take the case of the accident that happened on the Birmingham line—a case that had come before him. What were the facts? They would hardly be credited. But, perhaps it would be inconvenient for him to enter into the facts of that case on the present occasion, and he would defer his observations till the second reading.

Mr. *Gladstone* had thought he might venture to move for leave to bring in the bill, as no new principle was contained in it beyond what had been already before the House, and he had done so notwithstanding that the report on the subject was not yet delivered. But in a very few days that report would be on the Table of the House, and in that report would be given the detailed opinions of the officers on the accidents that had occurred, and their reasons for those opinions. He thought it was desirable for all parties that the whole subjects should be gone into, but, under the circumstances he had mentioned, not perhaps at present.

Mr. *Wakley* had not hesitated to allude to the accident on the Great Western, because the chairman of the company, being present in his place in the House, would be able to reply on the instant. But as there was no person in the House who could have offered a similar explanation on the part of the Birmingham Railway Company, he had abstained.

Mr. *C. Russell* expressed his satisfaction that the right hon. Gentleman had brought in this bill in accordance with the principle recommended last year. As there was to be another day for the discussion, he would confine his present observations to the allusion made by the hon. Member for Finsbury, to the accident that had recently occurred on the Great Western Railway. He could assure that hon. Gentleman and the House that no person in the country more deeply deplored that accident than did the company, nor had any persons in the country laboured more intensely and earnestly to avert such accidents, or, when they unfortunately had occurred, to prevent them in future. He had felt it his duty to attend the inquest on the sufferers by the accident alluded to, and axiously to consider whether any blame could attach to any officer of the company, and he could solemnly and sincerely declare his belief that the accident was more to be attributed to those causes that were under the control of Providence, and which could not be foreseen by man. He could show the hon. Member a section of the embankment where the accident occurred, by which it would be seen that it was caused by the percolation of the water at a stratum much deeper than the superficial portion of the embankment. The hon. Member had complained of the want of a watchman at Sonning-hill cutting. He would surely see that it was impossible to have a watch kept along the whole of a line, from one end to the other, extending 118 miles. Had there been any reason to fear danger at that particular spot, then there would have been a watchman, but there was no such reason. He should defer his remarks on the bill and its details until a future occasion.

Mr. *Ewart* differed with the hon. Member for Finsbury, on the question of Government control. He thought the right hon. Gentleman had acted wisely in not removing so much of the responsibility from the proprietors. Interfere with the personal responsibility of the directors, and you increased the danger to the public. By superintending, without interfering, the Government had exercised a wise discretion. The hon. Member for Finsbury said, that the power ought not to be intrusted to interested hands. Who were more interested than the directors in insuring the safety of the public? He hoped that neither the right hon. Gentleman, nor any Member of any Government would do away with the principle of non-interference, which ought to be the basis of all legislation on this subject. Looking at the effects of past legislation, it should not be forgotten that the older railways were, after all, the safest; and in the case of the new railways, the system of superintendance did not appear to have been attended with that additional safety to the public that might have been expected. He hoped, however, that it would be more efficacious in future. There was this anomaly in the law of England—that if a man survived the injuries he received, he could recover damages from those who were the cause of those injuries being inflicted; but if the man died, his surviving relatives had no remedy or means of recovering compensation. This was a strange anomaly, and ought not to be allowed to continue. He had no doubt that the number of accidents would diminish, as the experience of the railway directors increased; and he would give his cordial support to a measure which, while it would control, would not unwisely and hastily interfere with railway companies.

Mr. *Hardy* said, he thought that the provisions of the proposed measure did not go far enough; and he should feel obliged to the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Gladstone), if he were allowed to engraft a clause or two, in order to increase the public safety. The late accidents on the railways showed what ought to be done upon this subject. For instance, there was the accident on the Brighton railway, on which occasion he himself had very narrowly escaped, and which had resulted from two engines having been used. One of them was more powerful than the other; and it was his conviction that the more powerful engine, which was the second, pushed the other off the road and overturned it. The consequence was, that the other carriages were driven on the other side of the road. He attached much importance to these facts, because only three carriages was materially injured. One of those who almost dragged to pieces, and the other two were in much the same condition; but none of the passengers were hurt, except those who were in the carriages he had mentioned. Therefore, if something were done to prevent carriages with persons in them being placed near the engine, accidents of this kind to passengers were not likely to occur. There was likewise the recent accident on the Great Western Railway, to which the same observations applied. He would therefore, propose, (and the recommendation would tend to the advantage of the railway proprietors themselves), this contrivance to prevent, in cases of those accidents that might happen on any part of the road from the overturning of the engine, and not merely from slips of land, those accidents being attended by the fatal consequences that had resulted in the two instances he had named. He hoped that he should see in his right hon. Friend's Bill, some provision for this, that would at once be satisfactory to the public, and would be no injury to the proprietors of the railways themselves.

Sir *R. Peel* said, he thought that in matters that were conducted upon so large a scale, by companies with such large capitals, and in establishments that had, to a great extent, superseded other modes of travelling, if the Legislature could devise any precautions against the occurrence of accidents, it would be perfectly justified in so doing; and he felt certain that there could be no influence on the part of railway proprietors who might have seats in that House that could stand against the sense of that House and the influence of reason. He doubted whether all the influence of all the proprietors could prevent the adoption by Parliament of effectual measures for the regulation of railways, if it were shown that the regulations proposed would have the effect of preventing accidents. But he should deprecate the interference of Parliament being carried beyond the proper limits, because he felt certain that such an interference would not tend to the security of the public. It would be impossible for Parliament, or the Government, or any part of the Government, to undertake too minute an interference with the affairs of the railways; and the attempt would, in his opinion, greatly increase the risk of those travelling by them. In the first place, it was the interest of the railway companies to prevent accidents occurring. When accidents did occur, the result was a diminution of traffic on that particular line, and a preference was given to other modes of travelling. That hon. Members might form a correct opinion on this subject, he would recommend them to read the evidence that was received last year by the railway committee, which showed there were certain matters in respect to which Government could take an active part. They could undertake to offer suggestions, thus increasing the responsibility of the companies if those suggestions were not adopted; but he thought that, if any department of Government were to direct, as had been suggested by his hon. Friend, a certain interval between this engine and that particular description of carriages, the effect would be to increase rather than diminish the risk of accidents. The railway companies would, in such cases, feel relieved from the responsibility. They would then shield themselves from public indignation, on account of Government having the superintendence of the regulations. Then their vigilance would be relaxed; and they would have the power of asserting, that as the Government had relieved them from the responsibility, the Government ought to assume it. There were certain matters in which the Government could beneficially interfere, as in the instance of the railway establishments, and the management of the gates across roads; but, as to the appointment of a certain number of watchmen, or the regulation that the trains should not travel beyond a certain degree of speed, he thought legislation on those grounds would be impracticable. As he thought, the evidence already given before the committee proved that any attempt on the part of any department of the Government to prescribe rates of speed, or determine as to the engines, or the other matters that required actual experience or local knowledge, would be going beyond the proper authority of Government, and, in his opinion, would fail in the object in view. He believed that the effect of the measure now proposed would be to increase the personal safety of her Majesty's subjects travelling by means of railways.

Mr. *Labouchere* said, that the present bill differed somewhat from that which was proposed last session, inasmuch as his bill was more stringent, and gave greater power to the Board of Trade than this would give. Those portions of his measure that gave the Board of Trade such power had been referred to the consideration of a Select Committee of that House; and the result of their investigations was, that his opinion was altered upon the subject. He believed that the means most likely to accomplish the object that all had in view would be to leave undivided responsibility in the directors and officers of the different railways. He therefore thought that a sound discretion had been exercised in leaving those clauses out of the present bill. But it was a mistake to say, that the committee had been decidedly against the clause that gave the Board of Trade the power of licensing engine-drivers, because, that had not been referred to that committee, and they could not, therefore, have come to any decision upon it. As far as he could collect, the committee was of opinion, however, that at the present time it was not desirable to have a clause of that description included in the measure. He therefore did not blame the right hon. Member for not introducing that clause in the present bill. It was by no means a simple question, and it was not to be so easily legislated on as at first it might appear. He thought, that it would be the safer course to interfere with the companies too little rather than too much. He was not prepared to say, that it would not be expedient, after they had had more experience, for the Government to interfere to a greater extent than was now contemplated; but he thought, that in the present state of the question, the right hon. Gentleman had exercised a sound discretion in bringing forward the bill as now framed, and in giving the Board of Trade power only of making suggestions, and leaving it to the directors to act upon them or not.

Leave was given.

Distress in Paisley.] Mr. *Wallace* said, that in rising to bring forward the motion of which he had given notice, on the subject of the misery and destitution under which the inhabitants of Paisley and other towns in Renfrewshire had been so long suffering, he felt it due to that House to be as brief as possible. He should be thus brief in his statements, because he was convinced, that no aid would be required from him in making it evident, that great distress really existed; but the House and the country did not know the extent of the privations that had been brought to light by the committees appointed by the charity of individuals in that part of the country, and who had gone into all portions of the town of Paisley and its neighbourhood, in the course of their inquiries. As far as that misery had been made known, great sympathy had been excited; and he felt assured, that all that part of the country was truly sensible and grateful for the kind feeling that was so generally shown, and for the great sympathy that had been exhibited, from the Queen on her Throne, down to almost the meanest of her subjects. The distress of these people seemed to him as if it had been an incentive to them to behave, if possible, with more peacefulness and propriety. The town of Paisley had been, as was well known, for a long period employed in supplying fancy articles to the trade of London and other large towns in the kingdom; and, therefore, any stoppages, in trade, or any revulsion, had almost always fallen upon them, in consequence of orders not coming in for that description of goods. Her Majesty's Government were aware, that 17,500 persons were represented as in the receipt of daily assistance in the town of Paisley, and other neighbouring towns, of whom 15,000 were in Paisley alone. There were also 1,000 hand-loom weavers, and the committee were employed in giving them webs to supply them with occupation; besides whom there were 1,000 labourers, who were likewise employed by that same committee. The weavers could make by these webs at the rate of 4*s.* a week, but not more, working at them fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen hours a day. On the other hand, those who were supplied with money wherewith to obtain provisions for themselves and families, received about 1*s.* per week, or perhaps 2*d.* per day, for each individual. Now all those who had attended to the subject of gaols knew that the inmates were provided with food, which, supplied in the most economical manner, cost considerably more than double that amount, in order to maintain the prisoners in health and strength. Among the sufferers, however, in Paisley and its neighbourhood, there was little or no clothing, and no bedding on which to lie. And here he would draw a comparison between them and those who had the good fortune to be placed in gaol, or in some house of correction. He blamed no one: he would say nothing as to the causes of all this; but he would say, that the distress had reached an extent in his part of the country, that led him to the conviction, that it was his positive duty, or that of some other Member of the House, to make the statement, that he now took the opportunity of making. His proposal was, as would appear from the notice he had given, for an inquiry to be made, and that "an immediate and diligent inquiry." He had been asked by many hon. Members what sort of inquiry he proposed; and he had also been asked (he thought half officially) what was his own view on the subject? He believed that the only proper mode of making this inquiry would be to make it upon the spot, one or two persons being sent from London to carry on the investigation, and to report thereupon to the Government, and if it were customary in such cases, to the House. When he handed his notice to the Speaker, it would be seen that he had inserted the words, "upon the spot," as he deemed such an inquiry to be the only one that would be satisfactory. A Committee of that House had been suggested to him, but such a plan would lead to an endless inquiry, and no good result would be derived from it. It would occupy a committee very long, and would be calculated to raise hopes among the suffering people of Paisley and its neighbourhood that might not be realized, and would make them believe they were entirely neglected. He had been induced to urge this inquiry on the Government, since he had heard the reply given to the question put to the noble Lord opposite (Lord Stanley), as to emigration. The people of Paisley had a strong belief that a large field was about to be opened to them in the way of emigration. He intended to throw the blame on no one; but still the sufferings of those for whom he now spoke were not the less severe. There were large numbers of destitute who were not provided for by charity. If they came openly forward, they would be provided for, in one way or another; but a vast number of them could not be induced to come forward; and he had excellent authority for saying that such great destitution and misery were exhibited to the Committees of ladies and gentlemen who investigated the state of those classes, that they came home with a degree of sorrow and disgust, and with a feeling of total hopelessness that he could not describe. He had seen with great satisfaction, that a proper gift from the Government stores had been made to those persons, in a similar predicament, in Spitalfields; and he hoped that there would be a disposition on the part of the Government, to make a similar gift to his countrymen, who if the Spitalfields weavers deserved it, deserved it no less. He could assure the House, that nothing could exceed their misery or their deserts; and he therefore trusted that the Government if assistance had not already been sent to Paisley would raise means, by which the inhabitants of that town and its vicinity could be assisted. He would not conceal from the House, or from the Government, that the week before he came to London, a resolution to that effect had been come to by the relief committee of Paisley, presided over by the Provost of the town, and supported by the clergy and the great body of individuals of any station there. There were both clergy of the established Church and of dissenting congregations present at that meeting. A motion was made, that a petition should be sent to the Government praying for stores, either in the way of gift, as to the Spitalfields poor, or at a small cost, on which the committee might expend their remaining funds, and that such food as they could command, might be taken, free of duty, from the bonded stores. He held a copy of that resolution in his hand, but, he did not think it necessary to read it to the House. He regretted to add, that, great as was the distress in Paisley and its neighbourhood, it was still increasing, and that greatly diminished the prospect of employment to the people in the town. The distress was on the increase in Ayr, Renfrew, and the adjoining counties. It happened that many of those unfortunate people had work given for which their looms were not suited, and vast numbers of them went out on the roads to break stones, or undertook other heavy out-door work. At first, their hands were blistered, but after a while they got hard, and would in time become unfit for the fine work in which they would be employed in their own trade whenever it revived. He had now done, and should only offer his humble recommendation that two or three active, sensible Gentlemen out of that House—without the expense of a well paid Commission—should be sent down to Paisley to ascertain the actual condition of the people, and the extent of the distress. If that inquiry was refused to him, he hoped at least that her Majesty's Ministers would be prepared to bring forward some measure to relieve the distress and destitution, which was greater than he had known, even in the misery which had afflicted the people from time to time in the last twenty-five years. He concluded with moving an Address,

"Praying her Majesty will be graciously pleased to command that an immediate and diligent inquiry be made into the nature and extent of the misery and destitution under which the inhabitants of Paisley, and other towns in Renfrewshire have been suffering for so long a period, and are still enduring; and, further, that her Majesty will be graciously pleased to command that the said inquiry be prosecuted vigorously, so that the results may be laid, as soon as possible, before this House, with a view to its providing, with all speed, against the longer continuance of the intolerable distress; as also against the evident and imminent danger of disease and pestilence following in its usual course, thereby causing more numerous deaths from cold and hunger and actual starvation than hitherto, as well as increasing the ruinous tendencies of these appalling evils on the moral character of all who are directly affected by them, or who live within the range of their influence."

Sir *J. Graham* said, that he would preface the few observations which he intended to make to the House with expressing his opinion that the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down was entitled to great praise for the temperate and judicious manner in which he had brought forward this motion. With respect to the distress which the hon. Gentleman so feelingly described, he would admit that the hon. Gentleman had not exaggerated when he said that the number of persons now subsisting upon weekly relief in Paisley and its neighbourhood was 17,000. Under such circumstances it was hardly possible to exaggerate the distress, and that distress could be rendered more painful by no one circumstance more than by the excitement of expectations which must be disappointed. He therefore felt that it was the duty of the Government, as well as of the House, to proceed with the utmost caution. If there were any dispute as to the facts, he could understand the necessity for an inquiry. But he admitted that the distress was great, and he also fully admitted that no praise could be too high for the exemplary patience and fortitude with which it was borne. All the rights of property were observed in that neighbourhood, and the law was not violated. Under such circumstances he should think it the height of imprudence to take any steps which would excite hopes and at the same time disappoint them. He thought that the arrival in that district of two commissioners specially appointed, not to ascertain the fact of the distress—for that was admitted—but to make an inquiry, which in the terms of the hon. Gentleman's motion would "lead to speedy relief"—would raise hopes which it would be most imprudent to excite unless the House saw how that relief could be obtained. If the hon. Gentleman wanted to prove a special case by a searching inquiry, he should say that that inquiry would probably be best conducted on the spot by commissioners; and he could understand that there might be many special circumstances under which such an inquiry might be both requisite and useful, but he had great doubts that it could be so in so large a community as that of Paisley and its neighbourhood. That community had been for a long time subsisting on the wages arising from a manufacture in which they peculiarly excelled, and their great misfortune was, that the necessity for the use of that article had ceased suddenly, and to a great extent. There had been also a large export of that article to America, and the community of Paisley necessarily became involved in the distress consequent on the failure of the American trade. Then also the magistrates, who were creditors to a great extent of their fellow-citizens, and were the depositories of the money lodged in the savings banks, became involved in the general distress, and added to it by not being able to meet their liabilities. All these special circumstances would be, no doubt, very useful in proving a special case; but if the hon. Gentleman desired to have these circumstances investigated, he should say, that it should not be by a commission. The better course would be by a committee of this House, before whom, not a great number, but a few competent witnesses might be examined, and the facts duly established. He should say, that if this course would be likely to be satisfactory—and on this point the hon. Gentleman was able to judge, he should not object to it; but, as the matter now stood, he should say, that the appointment of a commission would give rise to misunderstandings, and lead to expectations which there could be no reasonable probability of their being ever able to realise. Under these circumstances, if the hon. Gentleman should divide the House on his motion as it now stood, he should, though not without great pain, feel it his duty to vote against it. The Government were not without information on the subject of the present distress. In every county in Scotland they had a sheriff-substitute constantly reporting the state of facts to Government, and it was not therefore necessary to bring persons here from Scotland to give that information which the Government was now receiving from those officers. But if there was any specific point which it was necessary to investigate, into which the Government had neglected to inquire, and as to which the hon. Gentleman had some peculiar sources of information, he should be willing to assist in investigating it. But though he should be sorry to do anything which the hon. Gentleman would think unkind, yet, acting on general views and not wishing to raise false expectations, he hoped the hon. Gentleman would not press the motion to a division; if he should, it would be his duty to vote against it.

Mr. *Hastie* wished to say a few words with respect to what had just fallen from the right hon. Baronet. He had heard nothing from that right hon. Baronet which could afford a hope to the distressed people of Paisley that relief of any description was at hand. It was stated that 17,000 persons had been depending for some time on a sum originally of not more than 6,500*l.*, and out of which the relief committee had now funds in hand not more than 1,500*l.* This had been generously provided by the liberality of the country, but it was impossible that those subscriptions could be long continued, and then, unless some relief should come from her Majesty's Government he would look forward to the consequences with fear and trembling. He threw out these hints that the House might take them into consideration before despair should seize on the unhappy sufferers of Paisley.

Mr. *W. S. O'Brien* thought this a good opportunity to make a few observations on the petition which he had presented the other night, praying that the Government might assist the suffering people of Paisley by an extensive system of emigration. He held in his hand a document which was signed eighteen months since, by no less than 3,000 persons, that on the part of the Government some aid should be given to the working classes by emigration. The fact was, that the amount which had been since employed in relieving their immediate distress would have been sufficient to place these people in situations where they could obtain ample remuneration for their labour. He was afraid that any change that could be proposed in the Corn-laws would not be a remedy of such a palpable character as those people seemed to expect. Hon. Members would see in all the papers that came last year from New South Wales complaints that the resources of that country could not be made available for want of sufficient hands. Last year 106,000 persons emigrated, but not more than one third of them went to British colonies; and in these colonies the great demand for labour was still unsatisfied. A great country like this, which found no difficulty in raising funds for any wars—no matter how speculative might be their characters—should not say that it could not find funds for so benevolent and beneficial a purpose as that of sending the unemployed and superabundant portion of its population to those colonies where they might obtain employment and food in abundance.

Mr. *Wakley* said, it was impossible to hear the satements of the hon. Gentleman who brought forward this motion without feeling the deepest commiseration for the sufferings which he described; but, at the same time, the case was one presenting extraordinary difficulties, because, if relief should be given in this case out of the public funds, it would be impossible to conceive but that other places would make similar applications, and the consequence would be, that complaints of injustice and partiality would arise from their not doing in other places what they had done in this. The hon. Gentleman, he must say, brought forward this case in a manner calculated to obtain for him the best attention not only of the House, but of the country at large. He made his allegations in such a manner that not a single fact was disputed, and that even the Government admitted that there was no doubt as to the facts. But the hon. Gentleman had failed to suggest a remedy. What was the use to inquire, when the facts were admitted—when every statement respecting them was regarded as rather under than over the mark? The question now was, had the hon. Gentleman any proposal to make for the relief of the distress which was admitted to exist? The proposal of the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down was feasible, but a great deal of time must elapse before it could be carried to such an extent as to produce any perceptible effect. His object in rising was to ask those Gentlemen who were acquainted with the law of Scotland what was the nature of the Poor-law in that country, and why the property of Scotland was not applicable as well as that of England to relieving the distress of the poor? He saw the Lord Advocate in his place, and he would ask him was there a Poor-law in Scotland? He understood that there was. And next, because it was no use for Scottish Gentlemen to come here and make application for the relief of that distress for which, perhaps, the existing law of Scotland might provide, he would ask what was the state of the administration of that law? If there were an adequate Poor-law it should be enforced; and if there were not, they ought to call on the Government to say that the poor of Scotland should be provided with an effectual Poor-law, that would give them instantaneous relief. He would undertake to carry such a law in one week if he could command a majority of ninety in that House. He understood that there was something bearing a resemblance to a Poor-law in Scotland, though he could not well understand how that could be, as there were no poor houses there—he did not mean such poor houses as we had now in this country, for such houses he had no desire to see established in Scotland or anywhere else, but such poor houses as we formerly had here. Considering what were now the sufferings of so many human beings in that country—the patience with which they had been borne, and the results to which they might lead if not soon relieved, he thought it would be a satisfaction to the House and to the country to know precisely and distinctly what was the nature of the poor-law of Scotland, and how it was carried into effect; for if it was not effectual for relieving the distresses of the poor of that country, he was confident that an effectual law would be speedily adopted.

Mr. *R. Yorke* considered the reply of the right hon. Baronet, under the circumstances, an unfeeling one. It struck him that if they were to have a commission, it was one before which he would be competent to appear, as he had been lately in Paisley himself for the purpose of ascertaining the facts respecting it. When he was there, he found 14,000 persons in a state of starvation, and those were depending upon the providential interposition of charity. His hope was, that Parliament would take off all taxes that affected articles used for the sustenance of human life.

Sir *V. Blake* said, as the motion was for an address to the Crown, he should propose, as an amendment, that the inquiry be extended, not alone to the nature and extent of the distress in Paisley, but also to the causes of the distress, as well as its nature and extent, that now unhappily prevailed throughout every part of the United Kingdom. The Parliament held in 1665 passed a bill perpetually to prohibit the exportation of all cattle from Ireland, dead or alive, great or small, fat or lean, which caused the greatest distress in Ireland. He had been informed that the lace and woollen manufactures of Germany could, after paying twenty per cent. *ad valorem* duty on the importation of those articles into England, and defraying the charges of freight by steam-vessels and carriage by railway, sell them even in Nottingham at full fifty per cent. under the price they could be manufactured for in England. If that was the fact, he added, the landlords were mad who refused to give the assistance necessary to the English manufacturer by repealing the provision laws. Every principle of humanity, policy, and justice demanded this concession at their hands; and if they did not grant it they might rest assured, that by means of the Poor-law, the paupers of this country would be speedily their masters.

Sir *R. Peel:* Sir, I should be very sorry indeed if any contention of debate, or any other cause whatever, could for a moment provoke the slightest levity of manner in this House on such a subject as that before us; and I therefore earnestly hope that the hon. Gentleman opposite will not press his motion. I hope that nothing will occur to create the least impression, that the House does not deeply sympathise with the distress of the poor of Paisley, as well as with the distress of those in every other part of the kingdom. I give full credit for sympathy with that distress to the hon. Gentleman who has brought forward this motion, and I am sure the House goes with him in that sympathy to the greatest extent. But I also think, that it is a matter of the last importance, not alone to these poor people, but to the country at large, that this sympathy should not betray us into the position of exciting unfounded hopes in their minds, which can end only in disappointment. And I look upon it as a point of greater importance still, that we should not, by any act or deed of ours, directly or indirectly, discourage those local exertions for the relief of that distress which there is no doubt exists—which alone can be effectual for the purpose. Nothing should be done by us that has the slightest tendency to cause any remission in those laudable exertions, but, on the contrary, we should encourage, by all the means in our power, those on the spot, who from their own abundance contribute to the assistance of their poorer fellow-men. If we hold out hopes that cannot be realised, what will be the effect of them upon the community? What, for instance, would be the effect of a scheme of emigration as applied to the distress of Paisley? Two commissioners are suggested by the hon. Gentleman to ascertain the exact amount of the distress of that town, and to suggest a remedy for it. Suppose they suggest emigration. How will the case stand then? The hon. Gentleman who proposed the motion has told us, that the habits of the poor people of that town, and the nature of their previous occupations, render them wholly unfit for any severe out-door labour, and that they are, therefore, incapable, even in their own country, of turning their labour to any employment besides that they had followed, with any chance of a profitable result. If that be the case in this country, how much more so must it be the case in a new country, in one of our colonies for instance—where they could only hope to exist by the severest description of out-door labour. But there is another point of view in which this case must be looked at if justice be done it. You must also take into your consideration the condition of the colonies themselves. You must not—you cannot, on any ground of justice or reason—send out persons from this country who are unfit for them. If you do, the immediate consequences of your act will be the utmost suffering to the parties whom you send out—persons inadequate to the exigencies of a colonial life—incapable of hard labour, and wholly unfit for the position in which you place them, while you will give the colonies the most just cause of complaint against you. I should think the greatest objects of relief in Paisley, for instance, are of all others the least fitted, on the hon. Gentleman's own showing, for the purposes of emigration. Young men of twenty or thirty years of age, whose hands are not yet wholly formed to any particular occupation, and whose frames are not warped into any particular attitude, in consequence of such occupation, may, it is true, earn their bread in Australia, or in Canada, but will any one say, that these are the real objects to be relieved, if you set about applying a remedy to the existing distress. No; the real objects to be relieved are men of fifty or sixty years of age, with large families — with hands formed, as the hon. Gentleman says, to their previous occupations—with bodies which cannot be bent to any other position than those occupations require—and consequently with an utter incapacity to subsist themselves in a colony where their occupations are unknown, and where only the hardest labour is available for a scanty support. But suppose you do send these poor persons out to our colonies. Are you, in the first place, prepared to send all their families along with them, or do you purpose to separate them from one another? If you send them out, unfitted as they are for the labour by which they can alone win a subsistence in the colonies, will you not send them, in such case, to suffer the greatest privations? Then, are you prepared to support them in the colonies? You cannot expect that the colonies will do so? and you know beforehand, from the hon. Gentleman, that these poor people are unfitted by their previous occupations to support themselves. If you do not support them, what will be the consequences? I can see none but absolute starvation for them and their families when they reach the colonies. Sir, under these circumstances, I hope the motion before the House will not be pressed to a division by the hon. Gentleman who has proposed it. If you agree to it, those who have hitherto been the most active and zealous in contributing to the support of the suffering poor of Paisley, will naturally remit their noble exertions, depending then altogether upon the interposition of the Government; and, further, the poor of that town will be taught to look for relief, from those who live among them to the Legislature, which cannot apply any effectual aid to their distress. That aid, to be effectual, must be local; and the motion of the hon. Gentleman, if acceded to by the House, would be at least but the postponement of the evil day. In the interval of six weeks that he proposes for this inquiry, I doubt not that any two or more men of common sense would finally report, that nothing could be done in the matter, and in the meantime the inquiry would serve but to aggravate and embitter the prevailing distress. I say not a word about hopes excited only to be disappointed—or of the effect that such an inquiry would naturally and necessarily have upon other places distressed, though not perhaps to the degree that prevails in Paisley; but, as in my opinion, it would be the greatest pain to the House to refuse its acquiescence in the motion, while I can see no ground on which they could accede to it, I have that confidence in the hon. Member—a confidence inspired by the temperate and judicious manner in which he has proposed it—which induces me to hope that he will not, under the circumstances, persist in pressing it on the consideration of the House.

Mr. *Wallace* said, that not a single word had fallen from him as to the advantages of a more extended system of emigration. He had only said, that the unfortunate people of Paisley, whose cause he had that night advocated, thought that an extended system of emigration was about being carried into execution by her Majesty's Goment, but that idea would have been already destroyed by the speech which the noble Lord opposite (Lord Stanley) had delivered the other night, and which would by this time have reached them. When he had first brought his motion forward he did not know that the facts which he had mentioned respecting the existence of the distress would have been admitted in that House to the full extent to which he had stated them. He had not been aware, when he had given notice of his motion, that the Government had stepped forward in an unusual manner, and had assisted the unfortunate people of Spitalfields by supplying them with clothing. The importance of these facts he wished to impress upon the minds of the Government. His motion contained an allusion to the disease, which, according to the opinions of the most eminent medical men, did not accompany, but which followed on the heels of such distress. On that point he would now say no more. He had wished that an inquiry should be instituted, and preventive means should be adopted, but as the Government had been receiving information from the county with which he was connected, and communications from its sheriff-depute, whose office, though not his name, had been mentioned in the course of the debate, and who was entitled to the confidence either of this or of any other Government—as they, too, were more competent than he could be to deal with the matter; and, knowing as he did how inefficacious a commission would be, though he had told his friends around him that he should divide the House before the right hon. Baronet had tendered him his advice, he now, under all the circumstances, would certainly withdraw his motion. He was content with finding that the feeling which had spread through the length and the breadth of the land was felt and had been evinced by the Members of the House of Commons. He now, with the permission of the House, begged to withdraw his motion, and he trusted that the Government would be enabled to perform their task connected with this subject without meeting with any difficulty from the course which he had that night adopted.

Lord *Stanley* said, that he merely wished to say a single word on a remark which had been made by the hon. Gentleman opposite. In his opinion, nothing could be more creditable to the hon. Member than the manner in which he had brought forward his motion; but it was most desirable that no impression should go abroad, arising from the accidental silence, of the intentional concealment of those connected with his department, that an extensive system of emigration was about to be adopted by the Government. It was most desirable that no such idea should be encouraged amongst the distressed people of Paisley. This rumour had been spread abroad. He had had repeated communications from many respectable persons connected with the working classes, asking him to explain the intentions of Government on this subject. He had throughout discouraged any such belief gaining ground. He had again and again said, that the rumour was entirely without foundation. He had not thought it right to make any public declaration on the matter, but in all the inquiries—and they had been numerous—which had come from Paisley, he always discouraged such ideas.

Mr. *Wallace* said, that, so far from the noble Lord misrepresenting the matter to the people of Paisley, he knew that he had had the candour distinctly to tell them that there was no such intention on the part of the Government. He had also distinctly told them that any schemes of extended emigration were not in agitation; but the only answer which he had got was, that "he had nothing to do with the present Government, and that as to the Government themselves they could not believe them."

Motion withdrawn.

Mr. *Wakley* thought that some explanation should be given as to the system of Poor-laws in Scotland.

The *Lord Advocate* would say a few words on the general question. There were Poor-laws existing throughout Scotland, but in many parishes it was not found necessary to put them into execution. They provided for every real pauper, but of course some check was necessary as to the distribution of relief. In England that check was found in the system of poor-houses; but this plan not being adopted in Scotland another was substituted in its place, and, accordingly, no relief whatever was given to able-bodied men. He could assure the House that that relief had not been found wanting in the grievous distress of the people of Paisley. A sum to the amount of ten thousand pounds had, in one form or another, been bestowed on the suffering poor of that place. It was a great and important question, whether a workhouse system was a better system; but into such a question the House could not now expect him to enter.

COPYRIGHT.] Mr. *Godson*, in rising to move for leave to bring in a bill for better securing the property in Copyright, said that, warned by the experience of the last two or three Sessions, he did not apply his bill to an extension of the duration of Copyright, but merely intended by it to secure the Copyright which existed by having it registered in the Court of Chancery, and having any assignments of the Copyright that might be afterwards made, and sums that might be raised upon it by way of mortgage, also registered, the property being thus made more secure, authors having the advantage of their own works, and the public the benefit of knowing in whom the Copyright existed if they wished to make a new edition of it, or to introduce it in a work of greater extent or invention. Of course, although he did not propose to extend the duration of Copyright, he did not wish to interfere with any gentleman who might think such a measure desirable. In a bill of this kind, which consisted principally of details, it was not necessary for him now to do more than ask leave to bring it in, leaving the details to be discussed at a future stage.

Mr. *Cochrane* hoped that the bill of the hon. Member would be proceeded with without delay. He was desirous that the question of Copyright should be again debated, and if it were so, he should move, as an amendment to the present bill, that the term for the continuance of Copyright should be extended. Who could be more entitled to the consideration of the Legislature than the authors of the country.

Mr. *Wakley* trusted that no further restraint should be placed on the literature of the day. Good authors gained their fair reward, and bad ones received as much as they deserved.

Leave given. Bill brought in and read a first time.

THE MUNICIPAL REGULATIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.] The *Attorney-general* asked leave to bring in a bill to explain and amend the 5th and 6th Wm 4th, c. 76, the Municipal Regulation Act. There was a clause in the act which provided against any councillor or alderman remaining in office while, either by himself or by his partner, he had any interest in property held under lease from the corporation. Now this was the case to a great extent in Liverpool, Bridgewater, and many other corporate towns. He had called the attention of the late Government to this subject, and he had received an answer, to the effect that the then Attorney-general had no doubt that a literal construction could not be put upon the clause. The Court of Queen's Bench had, however, thought differently. They laid down as law that the property could not be held, and the office at the same time retained; and also, that the parties doing so would be subject to a penalty for every time they acted as councillors. From forty to 100 actions could now be brought under the operation of this clause, and, consequently the Legislature would be breaking faith with that part of the public who were interested in this question, unless they speedily set the matter at rest.

Mr. *Jervis* supported the measure. He presumed that it was merely a declaratory act to state what the Legislature had formerly intended, and not to remedy the defect which they had committed.

Leave given.

WRIT OF ERROR.] The *Attorney-general* also moved for leave to bring in a bill to allow of a writ of error in any case of a judgment of the Court of Queen's Bench, upon an application for a mandamus. This measure had met with the approbation of the profession. The Court of Queen's Bench allowed of a writ of error in many cases, but not in all. There was no reason for this, and why should it not be altered? The bill allowed the writ in all cases.

Leave given.

SUPPLY.] The House in a Committee of Supply.

Sir George Clerk moved that a supply be granted to her Majesty.

Mr. *Wakley* said, that he took that opportunity of entering his protest—his solemn protest—against the mode in which the Queen's Speech had been framed this year, and for some years past. He would not detain the House long, but he thought that the manner in which the Speech was framed, was unbecoming the character of this House, and was unsuited to the power, dignity, and interest of the country. Every Session of Parliament had brought with it some excuse for adopting the mode of the preceding Session; and, since he had been in the House, excuses had been sufficiently numerous. On one occasion, he remembered it was stated to be highly desirous that the House should be unanimous on a young and beauteous Queen having come to the Throne; that was considered an occasion on which there should be no disunion, no difference of opinion—unanimity was the order of the day. Her Majesty's marriage was another happy occasion, when nothing was so pleasing to the House as unanimity. Then there were the results: first, there was a Princess, and now we had a Prince. The House was to express gratitude and joy on these occasions, which were perfectly in unison, he was well aware, with the feelings of the House and of the country. But on occasions of this sort, when the Commons of England were assembled to promote the public interests, he did think it was fitting, he thought it was becoming the duties they had to discharge, that some exposition in the Speech from the Throne should be made to this House which was calculated to attract attention throughout the world, and command for this House the respect and admiration of the enlightened portion of the universe. Instead of that, however, the speech, year after year, had been made up of a tissue, or net-work, of idle generalities. They could not put their finger upon any part of it to which their attention was particularly directed; and, after the house had heard the speech, and adopted an address which was an echo of the speech, no man in the House considered that either he or the Government was pledged to any one thing by the course of proceeding that had been adopted. He did not say, that the existing Government had behaved worse than the preceding Government, but those who constituted the present Government were free enough in their condemnation of the late Government; and yet when they themselves got into power, they adopted the very precedent established before. He wanted to see improvement; he desired to see some change; he desired some alteration which should be useful to the public, and not to go on, year after year, making the Speech from the Throne a thing to be laughed at, instead of a state document to be respected and admired by the community at large. This Session, there had been reasons for reserve. The right hon. Baronet, the First Lord of the Treasury, had said, that he should make an exposition of his views at a certain time, and that time he had named; but he understood, last Session, that the right hon. Gentleman was going to take a careful review of the circumstances of the country, and that the House having been prorogued for five months, on the meeting of Parliament, they should be made acquainted at once with the series of measures which he considered should be introduced for the public good. To-morrow night they were to have the first of these propositions; but he had yet to learn when they were to receive the last. He regarded the Factory Question and the Poor-law Question as two of the most important questions, as two questions which would, in the highest degree, affect the character and stability of the nation; and, in fact, the conduct of the executive Government upon these questions, and upon others which were well known, would determine what must be the issue of the political contests in which of late years they had been engaged. He regarded the aristocracy of England at this moment as on its trial; and he (Mr. Wakley), as a radical reformer, knew full well that when the constitution of England was changed by the enactment of the Reform Bill, it was utterly impossible that those who sought a more extensive measure of reform could complete their case until the other branch of the aristocracy, the branch then out of power, obtained the reins of office, and showed to the public what they would do for the relief of the public grievances. The most wealthy portion, the most influential portion, and, at present, the most respected portion of the aristocracy, were on their trial; they had the power to carry any measure for the public good; they wanted but the will to do so. He knew not whether that will existed. If the will did exist, there was the power in this and the other House of Parliament to accomplish the object. Henceforth there could be no delusion, no deception, no trickery, no intrigue, that would induce the public to be blind with reference to the real merits of the question. The aristocracy had the power, the wealth of England had the power, to pass any measure which might be deemed advisable to enact for the public benefit and advantage. Now, he had hoped that the party with which he had been connected would have been enabled at an early period of this Session to take one step in advance towards the accomplishment of their objects; because, after all, every public man desired to see his principles triumphant, to behold them in the ascendant. It was natural that the human mind should so aspire; but under the present mode of proceeding, as a medical man, he hardly knew what was to be done with the patient. The doctor said he could not prescribe unless he got his fee—he regretted the right hon. Gentleman was not now present—but this was a new mode of practice. It used to be the practice in former times, when a man consulted a physician, to say "This is the system I wish you to pursue;" and it was not the practice to say, "I will attend to your stomach next April, and your extremities afterwards;" but "I will show you the course to be pursued for the constitution generally, for the benefit of the entire system." Now, however, we were to have the remedies in fragments; he did not know when they were to receive the last of them; and therefore it was that on the motion for a committee of supply, in conformity with the recommendations of the Speech, he complained of that Speech as a political anomaly, a vapid, senseless, useless production. He said it was utterly unbecoming of this House, it was unworthy of the Parliament of this kingdom, and it was not calculated to increase in the public mind that respect which it was desirable the people should feel for the Houses of Parliament. He very much regretted that several Members of the other side of the House were not present, or he should certainly have extended his remarks; but he did now enter his protest solemnly and seriously against this mode of proceeding; and whatever might be the pretence, whatever might be put forward another year as a recommendation for unanimity, if the document should be the same as it was now, so full of emptiness, he, for one, would move an amendment, exhibiting, he trusted, a better statement with regard to the public interests; and he most certainly would divide the House on the question, for it was not right that, year after year, the House should be cozened into the adoption of a Speech of this kind, and leave the interests of the country untouched and wholly unsatisfied.

Sir G. *Clerk* said, though he did not dispute the right of the hon. Member for Finsbury to enter into any subjects connected with any grievances he wished to bring before the notice of the House, yet he thought his criticism on the speech lately delivered from the Throne, and on royal speeches in general, was extremely ill-timed, because the proper moment to have pointed out these generalties of which the hon. Member complained, or the more serious objection of grave omissions in that speech, was last Thursday evening, when the subject was under the consideration of the House. The noble Lord, the Member for the City of London, was perfectly willing that there should be entire unanimity on that occasion, and he was surprised that the hon. Member was so willing to defer to that noble Lord as not to take that opportunity of stating his objections. It was not on all occasions however, that the House was unanimous on speeches delivered from the Throne; and he thought the hon. Member would recollect that in the month of August last there was one exception to the rule. The hon. Member might if he pleased, frame an address to serve as a model which he might recommend for adoption when he became the principal adviser of the Crown. Though the hon. Gentleman had a right to bring the matter before the attention of the House, he should have preferred his doing so when the Ministers of the Crown, who framed the speech, were in their places, and would have been able to justify it.

He did not know what was the nature of the speech the hon. Gentleman would have delivered from the Throne; he always understood the chief object of the speech was to state the principal matters upon which advice was required, and to point out to the House those which were the most important. He did not know that any complaint had been made of an omission of the more prominent and important questions likely to engage the attention of Parliament in this Session, in the speech recently delivered. He had heard but one remark as to omission (and the reason of that had been explained by the right hon. Baronet the Home Secretary)—namely, that no notice had been taken of the bill for a renewal of the Poor-law; the right hon. Baronet stated that that was a question under the consideration of the House in the last Session, and it having been then agreed to continue the measure for a few months only, it was perfectly unnecessary to call the attention of Parliament to that which, as a matter of course, must come under their notice. The hon. Member had observed that the right hon. Baronet the First Lord of the Treasury had said, before the prorogation of Parliament, that as soon as Parliament re-assembled he would introduce measures as to the distress of the country. He thought that his right hon. Friend had redeemed the pledge which he had made to the House; for he had taken the first opportunity of giving notice of his intention of entering into one of those subjects which had excited the last degree of curiosity on the part of the public, and he had told them that as soon as the forms of the House would permit it; he would avail himself of the opportunity to be afforded him by the Committee of Ways and Means to move a substantive motion on the finances of the country, and at the same time to develope his views of the financial state of the country, and to state what were the intentions of her Majesty's Government. He would ask how it was possible for a Minister of the Crown to have taken an earlier opportunity of intimating the course which he intended to pursue with reference to these questions? The hon. Gentleman, the Member for Finsbury, indeed, might say, that his right hon. Friend had left out of consideration the state of the factories and of the New Poor-law, Now he must say that if there was any one thing which more than another had met with the concurrence of the House, it was the suggestion of his right hon. Friend (Sir R. Peel) that they should apply themselves to one of these subjects only at a time, and that they should not direct their attention to an immense number of bills at once, a course of proceeding which prevented hon. Members who might be interested in various questions from knowing when it might be the intention of the Government to bring forward particular measures. Under such a system it was impossible to discuss those matters with the attention which they deserved. He again asked whether his right hon. Friend's course was not the best which could be adopted? He would say that, looking to the experience of the former Sessions, the course which his right hon. Friend had chalked out was one which was much more likely to be attended with benefit to the country than if he brought in at the same moment all the important measures which it was necessary to introduce. The hon. Member for Finsbury asked what was the amount of the supply to be granted on this occasion. Now this was a matter of form on the present occasion. It was not necessary in the present stage of the proceedings to do more than move that a supply be granted to her Majesty. He hoped, therefore, that this motion would be agreed to without opposition.

Mr. *Wakley* said, he should certainly not oppose the motion. He had been in the House every evening—he had heard much that had gratified, and much that had given him pain—for he had never expected to be always pleased, and if he had he would have been much disappointed, and therefore he complained no more of the present Administration than he did of their predecessors, in reference to the Queen's Speech from the Throne. He complained that they had for many years pursued a course which was always injurious, and one which the country was disposed and had reason to deplore. He admitted that the right hon. Baronet (Sir Robert Peel) had come forward as quickly as possible with various statements which he had laid before the House; but, at the same time, he must take this opportunity of expressing his regret, that the Poor-law Commission Continuance Bill would not be brought forward until after Easter. He thought that the public would not be satisfied with this; he thought that the hon. Gentleman the Member for Knaresborough (Mr. Ferrand) would not be satisfied—his opinions, he presumed, could not have undergone such a mutation by his slight probation in reference to this question. In August last, the bill for the continuance of the Poor-law Commission was passed; that measure would expire in July next, and yet the new measure was not to be passed till after Easter; so that this important bill would have to go through both Houses of Parliament in seven or eight weeks; for most likely the Session was not to continue till the grouse-shooting commenced—till the end of August or the middle of September. It was to be hoped that, as party conflicts were now over, as a good majority was a rare thing, and must produce unanimity, they would have these bills brought in at an earlier period, and that the public would have time to see what those measures were before they became the law of the land; for otherwise it would be better to pass no bills at all than to pass ill-digested measures, he had a right to have expected that the Poor-law Commission Continuance Bill would have been the first of the measures introduced, in order that those who felt a deep interest in the question might be enabled the better to comprehend it; and if they disapproved of its details, they might have an opportunity of opposing them. But it appeared that this bill was to remain in the Home Secretary's office till Easter; so that about the 20th day of April, it would be introduced, and it must be got through before July, when the commission was to terminate. He did not think that this was acting fairly by the people, and on going into supply again, he should strongly express his opinions.

Mr. *Ferrand* said, that without differing from the hon. Member for Finsbury on the question of the Poor-law, he did not regret that the measure would not be introduced until after Easter, as it would enable the people of this country to express their opinions; and he sincerely trusted the people would lay their constitutional opinions before the country. He would say, that he was thoroughly convinced that the right hon. Baronet would be ultimately satisfied that the Poor-law Commissioners could not so abrogate the constitutional law of the land as they had done, but that they must yield to the force of public opinion.

House resumed. Report to be received.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, February, 9, 1842.

Minutes.] New Member. Sir Howard Douglas, for Liverpool.

Members appointed to serve by Mr. Speaker's warrant on the General Committee of Elections:—Lord Granville Somerset, Sir George Grey, Viscount Sandon, J. Loch, Esq., J. W. Patten, Esq., and Sir William Somerville.

Bills. 1°. Railways; Loan Societies Acts Continuance.

Petitions presented. By Mr. Prothero, Mr. G. Wood, Mr. Houldsworth, Mr. Brotherton, Mr. Hindley, Mr. Divett, Sir J. Easthope, Mr. Hutt, and a great number of other hon. Members, from a vast number of places, for the Total Repeal of the Corn-laws; and from Sunderland, against Repeal.—By Mr. Lowther, from Whitby, Huddersfield, and York, for a duty on Confectionary imported from the Channel Islands.—By Mr. Hutt, from Hull, for a Revision of the Import Duties.—By an hon. Member, from Dungannon, for a Revision of the Marriage Law (Ireland).—By Mr. Villiers, from the Guardians of the Poor of West Bromwich, for measures to promote Employment.—From Debtors in Queen's Bench, for Amendment of Law of Debtor and Creditor.

Municipal Corporations (Ireland).] Mr. *Powell* renewed his question to the noble Lord, the Secretary for Ireland, whether the Government intended to introduce a bill to remedy the defects of the Irish Municipal Act? For he knew that there were many practical difficulties in that act.

Lord *Eliot* replied, that the proper course was to apply first to the courts of law, and then if it were found that they had no power to apply a remedy, Parliament might be referred to.

Sir *D. Roche* begged to tell the noble Lord that this decision was throwing the town he represented into the trouble of going to law for a dozen years before the question could be settled.

Mr. Elton's Case.] Mr. *Curteis* said, that although he had given notice of his intention to ask a question relative to the case of Mr. Elton, he thought that he should be exercising a sound discretion by not putting that question; and he would only add that he hoped that the conciliatory manner in which he had treated this matter would meet with a corresponding spirit on the part of hon. Gentlemen in power.

An *Hon. Member* did not think that this question should be allowed to be disposed of, or to sleep without some further explanation. It had gone forth to the world that injustice had been done.

[Loud cries of "Order" compelled the hon. Gentleman to sit down.]

Sir *George Cockburn* said, that he was prepared to give every explanation which the House might require, but as the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Curteis) had thought that it would be the exercise of a wise and sound discretion not to put the question of which he had given notice, and as he himself agreed that the hon. Gentleman had acted wisely in adopting that course, he should, unless it should be the pleasure of the House, decline saying anything in reference to the case.

Subject at an end.

CORN LAWS—MINISTERIAL PLAN.] Sir R. Peel rose, and moved that the paragraph in her Majesty's Speech relating to the Corn Laws be read.

The motion being agreed to,—

The Clerk at the Table read the following paragraph in the Speech from the Throne:—"I recommend also to your consideration the state of the laws which affect the import of corn, and of other articles, the produce of foreign countries."

Sir R. Peel next moved, that the House resolve itself into a Committee to consider the laws relating to the import of corn.

The House accordingly resolved into Committee, and Mr. Greene, the chairman of committees, having taken the chair,—

Sir *R. Peel* again rose, and spoke as follows:—Sir, I rise in pursuance of the notice which I have given, to submit to the House the views of her Majesty's Government with respect to the modification and amendment of those laws which regulate the import of foreign corn. I should consider it a reflection on this House were I to prefer any claim on its patience and indulgence. Whatever demands I might have to prefer, and however unqualified I may be to relieve a subject necessarily one of detail, necessarily abstruse, by any illustrations of fancy, yet I am convinced that the paramount importance of the subject itself will induce the House to lend me that patient attention for which, under other circumstances, I might have deemed it necessary to appeal to its indulgence. I am aware of the difficulties which encompass the subject I am about to bring under the consideration of the House. With regard to a matter in respect to which such adverse opinions prevail, it is difficult to discuss it without making statements or admissions which will be seized on by those who entertain opposite opinions; but I feel that the best course I can pursue is to submit to the House the considerations which influenced the judgment and decision of her Majesty's Government, and to leave them to be decided on by the reason, moderation, and judgment of Parliament. I am confident that the course which her Majesty's Government have pursued in bringing forward this measure, whatever may be the differences of opinion as to its nature—I am confident that that course at least will meet with general approbation. If her Majesty's Government deemed it right to submit a measure of this character to the consideration of Parliament, it was due to the importance of the subject that the attention of Parliament should be called to it in the Speech from the Throne. It was due also to the importance of the subject that her Majesty's Government should undertake, on their own responsibility, to propose a measure for the adjustment of this question, and that no interval which could be avoided should be allowed to elapse between the recommendation contained in the Speech from the Throne, for consideration of the subject by Parliament, and the proposal of the measure itself. The only object which I shall aim at, in bringing this subject under the consideration of the House, will be to state as clearly and as intelligibly as I can the considerations which have influenced her Majesty's Government in reference to the nature of the measure I am about to propose. One other object I shall aim at—namely, to discuss this question, affecting such mighty interests, in a temper and spirit conformable with its great importance, bearing in mind how easy it is, on each side, to raise exaggerated apprehensions, and find inflammatory topics by which the feelings of the people may be excited. Her Majesty's Government have deemed it their duty to consider the Corn-laws with a view to their modification and amendment. They undertake the consideration of this question at a period when there is commercial distress, and when there exist great suffering and privations connected with that distress. But I feel it my duty, in the first place, to declare that, after having given to this subject the fullest consideration in my power, I cannot recommend the proposal which I have to make by exciting a hope that it will tend materially and immediately to the mitigation of that commercial distress. While I admit the existence of commercial distress—while I deplore the sufferings which it has occasioned, and sympathise with those who have unfortunately been exposed to privations, yet I feel bound to declare that I cannot attribute the distress—to the extent in which it was by some supposed imputable—to the operation of the Corn-laws. I do not view with those feelings of despondency, with which some are inclined to regard them, the commercial prospects of this country.

I do not believe that the resources of our commercial and manufacturing prosperity are dried up. I do see a combination of causes, acting concurrently and simultaneously, sufficient, in my opinion, to account, in a great degree, for the depression which has unfortunately prevailed among the manufacturing and commercial interests of this country; and I have that reliance on the native energies of this country, and I have had such frequent experience of preceding depressions and revivals almost as sudden and extraordinary as the depression which has recently occurred, that I do entertain a confident hope and belief that we may still look forward to the revival, by the operation of natural causes, of our commercial and manufacturing prosperity. It is impossible, I think, to take a review of the causes which have affected that prosperity without perceiving that there have been in operation, during the last four or five years, several causes, the separate effect of which would have been considerable, but the concurrent effect of which is sufficient to account for the depression which has taken place. If you look at the stimulus which was given, partly, I think, by the facilities of credit, to great undertakings in 1837 and 1838; if you look to the connection which existed between the directors and parties concerned in joint-stock banks and the manufacturing establishments; if you look at the immense efforts made for the increase of manufactories and for the building of houses for the reception of those who were to labour in those manufactories; if you look at the immigration of labour from the rural districts into districts the seats of manufactures, and the immense increase of mechanical power which took place in consequence in the years 1837 and 1838, you will hardly be surprised to find that the result which has before attended similar excitement and stimulus should again ensue. The same causes which operated here to produce depression operated also in the United States at the same time. The derangement of the monetary affairs of the United States has acted powerfully on the demand for our manufactured produce, and, concurrently with the depression in this country, has had the effect of diminishing the demand for British manufactures. There has been at the same time an interruption of our amicable relations with China, which has been the cause of a considerable deficiency in the exports to that country of our manufactured goods within a recent period, as compared with previous periods. There have been also up to a recent period an alarm of war in Europe, and that stagnation of commerce which, in some degree, is inseparable from such a state of things. The united effect of these causes goes far, in my opinion, to account for that depression in our prosperity, which has created so much regret. I am admitting the extent of that depression; and I am equally disposed to admit the extent of the privations and sufferings which have resulted; but I feel bound again to declare that I cannot recommend the measure which I am about to propose, by exciting a hope that any alteration of the Corn-laws will be a remedy for some of the evils which, in a great manufacturing country like this, seem inseparable from the system. Extend your foreign commerce as you may, depend on it that it is not a necessary principle that the means of employment for manual labour will be proportioned to the extent of your commerce. Whatever may be the extent of your commercial prosperity, whatever may be the demand for your manufactures, it is impossible not to feel that coincident with that general prosperity there may exist in particular districts the severest partial distress.

This must have been the case at periods of the greatest commercial and manufacturing prosperity. The necessary consequence of the sudden employment of machinery, diminishing the demand for manual labour, must be to expose in certain districts of the country those who depended for support on manual labour to great privations and suffering. You find hundreds of persons occupied in a great manufacturing establishment. Their reliance for subsistence has been placed on their labour in that establishment; but by an exercise of ingenuity some improvement in machinery is suddenly devised, and copied by others, which has the effect of depriving those who have relied on manual labour for subsistence of employment. This has been the case with the handloom weavers, and with many parties engaged in manufactures. It is the hard condition, inseparable from a manufacturing country, that there must be such revulsions in the demand for manual labour; and it is not an impeachment, therefore, of any commercial system that great privations and sufferings exist. Let it not be supposed that I am deprecating the exercise of skill and the improvement of mechanical power. It would be madness to attempt to check them. It would be folly to deny that in the aggregate this country has derived a great source of strength from such improvements in manufactories. The attempt to obstruct them would have the necessary effect of encouraging competitors and rivals, already too formidable. In referring to instances of distress, inseparably connected as it appears to me with such development of skill and improvement in machinery, I do not do so for the purpose of impeaching that skill or deprecating that improvement, but for the purpose of discouraging the too sanguine hope that any extent of legislative interference can exempt you from the occasional recurrence of distress. In proportion to the manufacturing excitement—to the *stimuli* to which I have referred—the *stimuli* of speculation—of facilities for undertakings created by undue advances and credit—in that proportion must you expect that in certain districts those privations to which the attention of Parliament has been called will occur. But looking at the general state of the commerce of this country, I neither see grounds for that despondency, with which some are in the habit of viewing it, nor can I see any ground for imputing to the operation of the Corn-laws, as some do, any material share in the evils at present existing. I think we are too apt to assume that there must be a constant and rapid increase in the amount of our exports to other countries, and we are too apt to despond when we find any occasional check in the amount of our exports. We decline to compare the extent of our commerce in the last year with a period of time more distant than the preceding year. We insist on comparing it with the year immediately preceding; and if there appears a decline we are too apt to apprehend that the sources of our prosperity are dried up. At all periods of our commercial history there have been these alternations of prosperity and depression. The latest period to which the returns respecting our trade are fully made up will include the year 1840, and comparing the state of trade in 1840 with its condition in preceding years, during the operation of the Corn-laws, I see no ground for the inference sometimes drawn, that the Corn-laws are the cause of our misfortunes, and that the repeal or alteration of them will supply an immediate remedy. In 1840 the exports of British produce and manufactures to all parts of the world exceeded the exports of 1837 by 9,355,000*l.* I am speaking now of declared value. The exports of 1840 exceeded those of 1838 by 1,345,000*l.* and fell short of the exports of 1839 by 1,827,000*l.*, a falling off sufficient no doubt, to create anxiety and unpleasantness. But the causes of that falling off are amply accounted for, by referring to the state of commercial transactions with the United States—a country with whose prosperity our own was so intimately interwoven. There, during that period, there were causes operating, connected with the monetary derangement, sufficient to account for the cessation of the American demand. I have stated that in 1840 as compared with 1839, there was a deficiency in our general exports of 1,827,000*l.* declared value. But in 1839 there was an export to the United States of goods to the value of 8,839,000*l.*, whereas, in 1840 the total amount of exports to that country was only 5,283,000*l.* thus showing a diminution of our exports to the United States in 1840, as compared with 1839, to the extent of 3,556,000*l.* That fact, therefore, is sufficient to account for the falling off in the general amount of exports in the year 1840 as compared with 1839. The falling off in the amount generally was greatly less than that in the amount taken by America, and the difference was consesequently made up by an extension of our commerce with other parts of the world. It is very satisfactory, Sir, for example, to view the progress of our colonial trade. In 1837 the exports to the colonies were 11,208,000*l.* in value; in 1838 they were 12,025,000*l.*; in 1839 they were 14,363,000*l.*; in 1840 they were 15,497,000*l.* Let us look also to the state of our commercial transactions with those countries in Europe which are the chief sources of our supply of food. Let us look at the state of our export trade with Germany, with Holland, and with Belgium. In 1839 the value of our exports to those three countries, the chief sources of our supply was 8,742,000*l.*; in 1838 it was 9,606,000*l.*; in 1839 it was 9,660,000*l.*; in 1840 it was 9,704,000*l.* So that even with respect to those countries from which we derive our chief supply of grain, when we stand in need of it, which are supposed to be such formidable competitors in manufactures, and from which the the demand for British produce and manufactures is supposed to be so rapidly diminishing, on account of our exclusion of their products, it still appears, on the whole, that there has been a progressive increase in the amount of our commerce carried on with them. I cannot, therefore, infer that the operation of the Corn-law is to be charged with the depression which is at present so severely felt in many branches of trade; I see other causes in operation which are sufficient, in a great degree, to account for the evils no one can deny to exist. In considering then, Sir, those modifications of the Corn-laws which it may be desirable to effect, it is important to review the proposals that have been made for this end. Various opinions are entertained with respect to the Corn-laws. There are some who will admit of no modification whatever in those laws as they now exist. My firm belief is, that that party in this country is exceedingly limited in number. I do believe that among the agriculturists themselves there is a prevailing feeling that the Corn-laws may be altered with advantage.

So far as I can collect that feeling from the communications which have been made to me, I must say I think that the impression among the agriculturists is in favour of modifying those laws in certain respects. There are others who entertain a decidedly opposite opinion, who will not hear of a modification, but insist on the immediate and absolute repeal of the Corn-laws. Sir, it is impossible not to feel that those who advocate the repeal of every impost of every kind upon the subsistence of the people are enabled to appeal to topics which give them a great advantage—to urge that there is a tax upon bread, a tax upon the subsistence of the people—to urge that that tax is maintained for the protection or advantage of a separate class. He who urges arguments of this kind must, of course, make a considerable impression upon those who listen to him. A comparison is made between the dearness of food in this country, and the cheapness of food in some other countries, and the inference is immediately drawn, that the people of this country ought to be placed upon the same footing in respect to the articles of subsistence, and that their condition will be benefited by the reduction of the price of food to that rate at which it can be purchased in other countries. Sir, it appears to me that any conclusion founded upon such a position will be altogether erroneous. The question is, can you infer the comfort and ease of the people from the price which they pay for their food? Reference is made to the price of food in Germany, and to the facility which the low price of sustenance gives for the establishment of manufactures; and the inference is hastily and unwisely drawn that the people of this country would be placed in a situation of greater comfort if the price of food should undergo a corresponding reduction, if it should be equalized with the price prevailing in Germany. Now, I apprehend the true question is, not what is the price of food, but what is the command which the labouring classes of the population have of all that constitutes the enjoyments of life, whether these be necessaries or luxuries, partaking, in point of fact, from the universal prevalence of consumption, of the nature of necessaries. Now let us compare the condition of the labouring classes in this country, under the operation of the Corn-laws, with their condition in other countries in which, I admit, the price of provisions is greatly less. There is nothing to impede the cultivation of corn in the Prussian states, in which its price is greatly lower than in this country. But can it be thence inferred that the condition of the people in the Prussian states is preferable to the condition of the people in this country, or that the consequence of an immense reduction in the price of various articles, and particularly in the price of food, must necessarily lead to a great increase in the comforts and enjoyments of the labouring classes in this country? Sir, there are means, from sources I apprehend of unquestionable authority, for forming a judgment as to the comparative degree of comfort enjoyed by the people of the two countries I have mentioned; and, before you determine that a low price of provisions is necessarily essential to manufacturing industry, general consumption, or to the comforts and enjoyments of the people, it will be well to weigh the materials of which you are possessed for forming a judgment on the subject.

Sir, in the report of the committee which sat for the revision of the import duties, there is evidence upon this point given by the hon. Gentleman, the Member for Bolton, whose attention has been directed to this subject, who has collected the materials of information and comparison, and who, before that committee, as well as in the report which he made on the Prussian League, on the state of our commercial relations with Prussia, and the laws which exist in that country with reference to trade, has made statements as to the comparative consumption of the people of this country and the inhabitants of the Prussian states. Let us look to the great articles of consumption. I will begin by admitting that meat is dear in this country; that corn is dear; and that the other great articles which constitute the sustenance of the people and add to their comforts are dear; that they are much higher in price in this country than in Prussia; but, as I said before, it appears to me that the true test is not the comparative lowness of price, but the command which the people have over all that constitutes comfort and enjoyment. I will begin, then, with meat, and I will quote no authority which can be suspected—I will take my information from a perfectly unobjectionable source. I will refer to one who differs entirely from me with regard to the operation of the Corn-laws, and who is a decided advocate for their repeal. Dr. Bowring's calculation with respect to the consumption of meat was made in 1840, and given in his report on the Zollverein. The hon. and learned Gentleman spoke on a state of things in this country when the Corn-laws had been in operation for nearly thirty years, affecting, as they must have done, if it was their tendency to produce such effects, the comfort of the people, and consequently the means of consumption within their power. Dr. Bowring then says, that in Prussia,—and I beg the House will remember that the means of ascertaining the exact proportion are believed to exist,—14,000,000 inhabitants consume in one year 485,000,000lb. of meat, that is, 35lb. per head. The hon. and learned Gentleman says again, that in this country 25,000,000 persons consume 50lb. per head yearly; that the quantity cannot be less than 50lb.; and that it has been frequently estimated at 100lb. I take the lowest calculation, from which the House will observe it appears that while the inhabitants of Prussia consume but 35lb. per head, those of the British empire consume at least 50lb. I am not attempting to deny, by the quotation of these facts, the severity of that distress which prevails in many parts of the country. I could not have attended the discussions which have taken place without feeling a perfect conviction that in Paisley and many other places there is a fearful amount of distress. Do I mean to say, for instance, that the 17,000 persons in Paisley who are supported by charitable contributions consume meat to any thing like the extent I have stated? Not at all; but it is impossible to argue on this subject without drawing general inferences from general statements. I must not be taunted with the remark that individuals at Paisley, Stockport, and other places do not consume 50lb. of meat per year. I admit they do not; but in drawing general conclusions, with reference to legislation, you have no other alternative than to deal with general averages and general results. I ask you again, before you determine that high prices are necessary evils, to compare the consumption of sugar in this country with that of other European States. I rely entirely on the authority of the hon. and learned Gentleman. The hon. Member states the consumption of sugar in France at 4¾lb. per head annually; I will say 5lb., as there may be some increase which he has overlooked. In the States of the German League, it is 4lb.; in Europe generally, 2½lb.; while the consumption of Great Britain is calculated by the hon. Gentleman at 17lb. per head. Taking next the consumption of wheat, I find that Mr. Deacon Hume, a gentleman whose loss I am sure we must all sincerely deplore, states the consumption of this country to be one quarter of wheat for each person. Dr. Bowring calculates that 24,000,000 of inhabitants in Great Britain consume 45,000,000 quarters of all kinds of grain. I beg the House to recollect, that I take the estimate of two gentlemen possessed of ample means of information, and entertaining views on this question which free their testimony from all suspicion. Mr. Hume, then, made our consumption one quarter of wheat per head. The hon. Gentleman (Dr. Bowring) allows nearly two quarters of grain to each individual. In the Prussian States, he says, 14,000,000 of inhabitants consume 13,000,000 quarters of grain, being less than one quarter to each person. Again, while Mr. Hume allows one quarter of wheat per head in England, the hon. Gentleman calculates that of the one quarter of grain which he assigns to each individual in Prussia, three fourths at least consist of rye. Throughout the Prussian States, the consumption of rye to wheat, he says, is in the proportion of from three and four to one. In 124 towns of the League he estimates the consumption per head of 65 lb. of wheat, and 241 lb. of rye; that is to say, each individual consumes very little more than one bushel of wheat, instead of one quarter. In England, the hon. Gentleman states the consumption of tea at 1 lb. per head, annually; in the Prussian states at only ¼lb. The consumption of salt, he says, is 16½ lb. in Prussia, and 22½ lb. in England. The annual consumption of cotton goods in Prussia, he says, is about 4⅓ lbs. for a family of five persons, which is about half the amount supposed to be used in England. The consumption of woollen cloth in Prussia amounts, he says, to 2⅙ ells for each individual; in Great Britain, it has been estimated at 5¾ ells. The consumption of tobacco appears to be greater in Prussia than in England, it being 3 lb. per head in the former country, and 1 lb. in the latter. Of butter 2 lb. per head are used in Prussia, and only 1 lb. in England. But, taking the other great articles I have enumerated, it is shown, that the consumption of them by each individual in this country, for the year 1840, was very much greater, although, in that year, the price of corn was exceedingly high, compared with the price in Prussia. So that, looking to the command enjoyed by the laborious classes, of the necessaries and comforts of life, it is found to exist to a far greater extent in England than in Prussia, although there, the price of grain scarcely exceeds half that which it bears in this country. I do not mean to say, that this forms any argument against increasing that amount; I do not wish to push my conclusion further than the point to which it can be legitimately brought. My argument goes to show, that it is not fair to appeal to the diminished price of food in other countries as proving increased comfort in the people in proportion as the article is low priced.

Additional information has been very recently laid on the Table, with respect to the condition of the working classes in Belgium. I invite the attention of the House to the prices of manual labour there, as stated in this document. The average prices of labour are, for agricultural labourers, 11*d.* a-day; for weavers, 1*s.* a-day; for masons, 1*s.* 3*d.* a-day; for locksmiths and carpenters, 1*s.* 3¾*d.* a-day; for operatives, working in manufactories, 1*s.* 3*d.* a-day; for operatives, working in quarries, mines, &c., 1*s.* 4*d.* a-day; for jewellers, goldsmiths, and others, 1*s.* 8*d.* a-day. That is the rate of wages in Belgium. Now, what is the price of corn in that country? Last year, at Ostend, wheat was from 51*s.* 9*d.* to 53*s.* a-quarter; at Antwerp, it was 51*s.* to 51*s.* 2*d.* a-quarter. Taking the general average prices of labour in Belgium, and comparing them with the amount of wages received by the labourers, it does appear to me, that notwithstanding the amount of the manufacturing wages, and notwithstanding the amount of the agricultural wages, which are received there, it does, I say, clearly appear to me, that those wages do not give the labourer there such a command of subsistence, as that given him by the rate of wages usual in this country. I refer to this for the purpose of confirming my impression, that to look for any rapid or great change in the condition of the working population of this country from any extensive change of the Corn-laws, would subject you to great disappointment. My firm belief is — I am now speaking with reference to those who wish for an absolute repeal of these laws—that if the House of Commons should be induced to pledge itself to a total repeal, which we on this side of the House deprecate so much, without relieving permanently the manufactures of the country, you will only superadd the severest agricultural distress. Any such disturbance of agriculture as must follow from a total repeal of the Corn-laws would, in my opinion, lead to unfavourable results, not only with respect to the agriculturists themselves, but also to all those numerous classes who are identified with them in interest.

There is, however, another portion of those who wish for an alteration of the existing laws who would not go the length of total repeal, but desire a substitution for the present, at least, of a fixed duty. With respect then to the ground as thus narrowed, they who are favourable to a fixed duty on corn admit that the agriculturist of this country is entitled to some protection, and therefore they seek to impose a duty invariable in its amount on the importation of foreign corn. Now, with respect to this proposition, it must be remembered that whatever odium attaches to the imposition of a variable duty must apply with equal force to the imposition of a fixed. (A cry of "*No, no,*" from the Opposition benches.) Hon. Members do not seem to apprehend my meaning. I was not saying that exactly the same objections apply to a variable as to a fixed scale of duty. I was only saying, that so far as odium attaches on the imposition of any duty at all, to that extent odium attaches to the imposition of a fixed duty. There might possibly be advantages in a fixed duty which did not apply to the case of a variable duty, but the argument against the imposition of any duty whatever on the importation of the subsistence of the people applies equally to the imposition of a fixed duty. Either the one or the other is imposed on the ground that the agriculturist needs protection. On principle, however, the imposition of a fixed duty rests on the same grounds, and must on principle be defended by the same arguments, as the imposition of a variable duty. Together with my Colleagues, and in concert with them, I have given to the question of a fixed duty the fullest and most patient attention; and if I could have come to the conclusion that for the variable scale of duty it would be better to substitute a fixed duty, I hope I should—considering the obligations under which I act as Minister of the Crown—I hope I should have had the moral courage to avow my conviction, and to propose a fixed duty for the adoption of the House: but, under the actually existing circumstances of the country, I cannot reconcile it to myself to propose to the House that measure for its adoption. But I do not see how to propose such a fixed duty as shall be sufficient for the protection of the agriculturists of this country. I agree that for the last four years the average supply of this country has been unequal to the demand; but in considering this question it becomes important to ascertain what is the probability that this country from its own resources can be able to supply its own population. Now, I am not prepared to admit that this country is unable in ordinary years to supply its own population. If I formed my judgment from the circumstances of the last four years, I should have been compelled to conclude that we were dependent on foreign supply for a great proportion of our consumption; I should have been compelled to come to this conclusion, because the average of the last four years importation of foreign corn into this country was 2,300,000 quarters. But if we take a longer period—if we take twelve or thirteen years, then it would appear, that on the whole, the annual average importation of foreign corn was very considerably smaller. In proof of this I beg to state, that taking the quantities of wheat and wheaten flour imported in those years, it appeared that the whole did not amount to more than 12,000,000 or 13,000,000 of quarters. I will state it more particularly since the year 1828. From July the 5th, 1828, to January the 1st, 1841, the whole quantity of wheat and wheaten flour entered for home consumption was 13,475,000 quarters; and thus I think it must be admitted, that if you take any period of ten years, or taking a somewhat shorter period even, you cannot hope for any period of anything like ten years to pass without seasons occuring within it during which you must be dependent on foreign supply. You cannot hope for an absolute freedom from all dependence on foreign supply some time in the course of a period of ten years, and therefore in that sense you are not now independent of foreign supply. Looking, then, at the question from this point of view, I retain my opinion, which I expressed some time ago, that it is of the utmost importance to the interests of this country, that you should be as far as possible independent of foreign supply. By this I do not mean absolute independence, for that, perhaps, is impossible; and nothing I think would be more injurious than to pass such laws as would give rise to a general impression that it was intended to keep this country in absolute independence of foreign supply; but, speaking generally, I say that it is of importance in a country like this, where the chief subsistence of the labourer consists of wheat, if we resort to foreign countries for supplies, to take care that those supplies should be for the purpose of making up deficiencies rather than as the chief sources of subsistence. Again, if I draw my inference from the last four years, I should be bound to admit, that this country, on account of the increased population, was dependent on foreign countries for a considerable amount of annual supply, because, as I said before, the amount derived from foreign countries in those years was as much as 2,300,000 quarters. But take the last ten years, and what do we find? With respect to the first six years, the produce in those years was sufficient to supply the consumption, or very nearly so; for, in the first six years of the last ten, the average annual importation was only 137,000 quarters. Taking, however, the years 1832, 1833, 1834, 1835, 1836, and 1837, it would be too much to infer, that the population has so rapidly increased with reference to the production of subsistence, that you must abandon altogether the hope of deriving your supplies from your own fields. Within the last ten years the increase of population has exceeded any thing that has ever hitherto been known in this country, and during the last four years the demand for foreign corn has been much greater than usual; but for the greater part of the ten years, the produce of the country has been found equal to its necessities. Therefore I cannot bring myself to the conclusion, that there must be periodical, or even an annual importation of foreign corn, in order to supply the wants of the country; and therefore, in determining our course on this occasion, we have to provide for the case of the produce of comparatively abundant years, as well as for years of comparative scarcity. Now, six years of good harvests may again recur consecutively, in which the produce of the country shall equal its necessities. If they do occur, then, what I fear from your fixed duty would be, that the unlimited right of import at a given amount of duty, which you could always maintain in periods of scarcity, would expose this country to great suffering and distress from producing by excess too great a fall in the prices of agricultural produce, and the remuneration of agricultural labour. It has been observed by writers of great authority, that favourable and unfavourable seasons return in certain cycles; that a year of abundance does not follow a year of scarcity, but that you will find five or six years of the one followed by five or six years of the other. Now, the effect of a fixed duty will be at all times, and under all circumstances, to admit foreign corn to our markets, the produce of a favourable harvest on the continent generally corresponding with that of a favourable harvest here. The great producing countries are within the same parallels of latitude, and are affected by the same causes, and you will generally find that an abundant harvest here has been contemporaneous with an abundant harvest in most countries on the continent. Now, whenever there is an abundant harvest, a slight addition to the amount of corn brought into the market produces a difference in the price very disproportionate to the extent of such addition.

Mr. Tooke, in his *History of Prices*, lays down the position that prices vary in a ratio very different from the variation in quantity, and that the difference of ratio between quantities and prices is liable to alter according to the nature of the commodity, but is greater probably in the case of corn than in that of most other articles of extensive consumption. Mr. Tooke also institutes a comparison between the produce of deficient and productive harvests on the continent, and states that a deficient harvest here is accompanied generally by a deficient harvest in the countries from which our supplies are usually derived, and that an abundant harvest here is usually accompanied by an abundant harvest there. If that be so, then, when the harvest in this country is sufficient, or very nearly sufficient, to afford a sufficient supply of food, clearly we shall not stand in need of importation from abroad; but if there comes a series of deficient harvests, in that case it appears to me, that there will be such discouragement given to the national agriculture, as must ultimately lead to that dependence for subsistence on foreign supply which I should most earnestly deprecate. But it is argued on the other side by the advocates of a fixed duty, that a fixed duty will prevent these great alternations, and that though it might be difficult to support the fixed duty in times of scarcity, yet the tendency of this duty will be to preserve the country against the occurrence of such contingencies, during which, it is admitted, it would be difficult to maintain it. Now, it appears to me, that such fluctuations of prices are continually taking place, in consequence of the variations of the seasons, as it will be impossible to provide against by legislation, and that no law which you could pass for the establishment of a fixed duty would, in case of a deficient harvest here and on the continent also, prevent a rise to such prices as would render it impossible to maintain the fixed duty. Look to the case of the United States; they are not subject to Corn-laws, yet there you will find fluctuations in the prices, arising out of the variation in the seasons, altogether as great as takes place here. In Prussia, I find that the price of rye, a grain not subject to the operation of the Corn-laws, is liable to fluctuations as great as wheat is subject to under the operation of those laws. In fact, fluctuations in price, must depend so much on the seasons that no law, in my opinion, can guard against the occurrence of high prices. But, if high prices occur, will you maintain your fixed duty? If you impose a fixed duty of 8*s*. or 10*s*., and if you do not authorise some relaxation in periods of scarcity, then, supposing prices to rise to 80*s*. or 90*s*., I retain the opinion which I expressed last Session, that no Government in such a case could undertake to enforce the payment of the duty. If that be admitted, then you must make some provision for a relaxation of the duty; but if you intrust this power to the Executive Government, you introduce uncertainty into the system, you introduce a power difficult to exercise, and liable to abuse; and you destroy altogether the grounds for looking forwards to permanence of mercantile arrangements, which is the great secret of commercial success. I have again, therefore, after considering this subject with the fullest attention, come to the conclusion that it would not be advisable for Parliament to legislate on the principle of applying a fixed duty to the importation of foreign corn.

The alterations of the law which I shall propose will proceed on the principle of retaining a duty upon corn, varying inversely with the price of the article in the home market—*i. e.* the principle of the existing law. The retention of that principle necessarily involves the maintenance of a system of averages. It has, indeed, been said that there would be a great advantage in sweeping away altogether the system of averages. It is quite obvious that whether it may or may not be desirable to abandon the system of averages with respect to the imposition of a duty on corn, you must nevertheless maintain a system of averages because the whole of your proceedings under the Tithe Commutation Act are founded on the system of averages. It is impossible for you to abolish the system of averages, because the annual payments on account of tithes are founded on calculations connected with it; and it does appear to me, that as the averages must be maintained for the purpose of the payments under the Tithe Commutation Act, it would not be expedient to adopt any other system of averages materially varying in principle from that for determining the duty on corn. I hope I shall not be misunderstood. I am not saying, that because there is a system of averages for fixing the payments to be made under the Tithe Commutation Act, therefore you must apply a system of averages for the purpose of determining the duty on corn. That is not my argument. I am merely stating that you cannot dispense with a system of averages while your present Tithe Commutation Act continues in force. The averages must be taken, in order to determine the payments under the tithe law; and I say, that as you have to determine the amount of payment applicable to tithe by averages, and also the amount of duty to be imposed on corn, it would be inconvenient on the one hand to have two systems of averages prevailing in the country at the same time; while on the other hand, it would be inconvenient and unjust to depart materially from that principle on which the averages with respect to tithes are determined. I propose, therefore, as a necessary incident of a varying duty, to retain a system of averages. Now, there is a very general impression throughout the country that there have been very great frauds in respect of the averages. There is a very general impression, particularly on the part of the agricultural body, that very great frauds have been practised with regard to the averages, a very extensive combination being supposed to have been entered into for the purpose of influencing the averages, and procuring the release of corn at a lower rate of duty than it ought to have paid. I am not disposed to deny, that such a combination may, in some cases, have been entered into, and that in some instances frauds may have been practised; but I very greatly doubt, whether they have been practised to any such extent or with any such effect as is generally supposed. It is generally supposed, that the returns for London unduly influence the averages, and that in Leeds, Wakefield, and other great towns in Yorkshire there have been great and successful combinations for the purpose of unduly influencing the averages. As I said before, I am inclined to think that the impression on this subject may not be altogether without foundation, but still the apprehensions entertained have been greatly exaggerated. Taking the aggregate averages of the kingdom for the six weeks in 1841, ending August the 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th, September 3rd and 7th, the price of wheat was 73*s.* 1*d.*; and if I exclude the London market from the averages altogether, the general average would be 72*s.* 8*d.* in place of 73*s.* 1*d.* If I exclude the Yorkshire markets, the average would be 71*s.* 10*d.* It is possible that by raising the price in London, or some of the great corn markets, you create an influence which will raise the price in the other markets of the kingdom; but, so far as you can judge from figures and returns, I think the apprehension that there have been extensive frauds with respect to the averages is, as I said before, if not altogether unfounded, at least very greatly exaggerated. The difference in the aggregate averages, excluding London, amounts in these six weeks to only 5*d.*; excluding Wakefield and the other Yorkshire markets, the difference in the average is only 1*s.* 3*d.*; and if London, Leeds, and Wakefield be excluded, the difference is 1*s.* 1*d.*

Lord *J. Russell:* These differences would make a material alteration in the rate of duty to be paid.

Sir *R. Peel:* Undoubtedly the difference, although so very slight, would affect the amount of duty; but the price of corn in London is much higher than in the country; and therefore I maintain that it is not necessarily to be taken as a ground for the imputation of fraud that the London average exceeds the country average. I will now take the average in 1838; from the 13th of August to the 7th of September the weekly aggregate average of the kingdom was 73*s.* The exclusion of the London market would have made no difference. In 1840, the aggregate average from July 24th to August 28th was 72*s.* 1*d.*; the average, exclusive of the London market, was 70*s.* 11*d.*; but that difference greatly affected the amount of duty, because when the price is 72*s.* and under 73*s.*, the duty per quarter is only 2*s.* 8*d.*, while the exclusion of the London market would have raised the duty to 10*s.* 8*d.*, the price being above 70*s.* and under 71*s.* At the same time, as I said before, we cannot, I think, fairly infer fraud from the higher average of the London market. Now various proposals have been made with respect to the amendment of the law of averages—proposals which have received the utmost consideration from her Majesty's Government. I think there will be a general agreement in this, that whatever system be devised, fraud should as far as possible be excluded, and that all should be fair and legitimate. It is advised by some that returns should be made by the growers only. That proposal has been made by many. I think it impossible to adopt such a suggestion. At present Irish and Scotch corn are admitted into the averages of this country; it would be impossible, therefore, to have in these cases a certificate from the grower, and the exclusion of Irish and Scotch corn from the averages would have a material effect in raising the price of corn. I must also state that I think we ought to guard as far as we can against fraud, but I do not think we ought to attempt to increase protection by any indirect operation. If a certain amount of protection be requisite, and if the Legislature will consent to give it, let it be given directly and openly. It would not be fair to procure an indirect protection and encouragement for domestic agriculture by any suggestion with respect to the averages which had not immediately in view the prevention of fraud and collusion. Various alterations in the law of averages might be made which would have that effect, and which, if they are necessary for the purpose of guarding against fraud, ought, in my opinion, to be introduced, but for the purpose of getting an indirect protection for agriculture I would not be a party to the proposal of any. It has been suggested by some that the seller should be required, under a penalty, to make a return of the corn sold. It is difficult to foresee what might be the effect of an enactment of that kind, requiring under a penalty every party who might sell a certain proportion of corn to make a return of the quantity sold. The great and only effectual security against fraud in the averages is to take away the temptation to commit it. If you deprive the parties of any motive of self-interest to combine, you take the best and most effective security against the commission of fraud. The proposal of her Majesty's Government with respect to the taking of the averages will be this:—They will propose to take the average in the present mode from the factor, miller, and purchaser of corn—the party who, under the existing law, makes a return at the close of each market day of the whole of the purchases he has made during the preceeding week. Upon the whole, we can see no advantage in departing from that principle in taking the averages—making the buyer of corn return the amount of sales of the preceding week, and trusting to the alterations we may make in the levying of the duty for the purpose of effectually preventing fraud. We shall propose that the duty of collecting the returns shall be devolved upon the excise. The excise is perfectly competent to undertake it. That department has an officer employed in each market town—an officer qualified for the discharge of the duty—an officer who has other important cognate functions to perform, and who will be enabled at a very small comparative increase of expense to overtake this additional duty; while his general ability, his habits of business, and the responsibility he incurs from being a public officer, afford a greater security against fraud than could be taken by intrusting the duty to private individuals. We propose, therefore, that the averages should be taken as at present; that they shall be returned to an excise officer acting under the authority of the Board of Excise. Another security we propose to take is to widen the range from which the returns shall be received. At present there are 150 towns named in the Corn Act from which returns are received. From that number of 150 many considerable towns are excluded, in which, since the passing of the present Corn-law, markets have grown up, where considerable quantities of grain are disposed of. We propose, therefore, not to give a discretionary power to any executive officer for the purpose of adding towns from which the averages should be collected; but in the bill which we shall introduce, we propose to name specifically the towns having corn markets to be admitted within the range, but which are now excluded from the list of 150.

It appears to me, that the more you widen the range from which you collect the corn returns, the greater security you take against the averages being influenced by combination and fraud. The best means of determining what is the real average of corn, is by ascertaining its price in a greater number of markets. At present the towns selected are towns in England and Wales, and although I propose to add to their number, I should still restrict them to towns in England and Wales.

Lord *Palmerston:* Can you state the number to be admitted?

Sir *R. Peel:* At present there are 150. I propose to enlarge the range by adding others where corn markets have grown up, and the towns to be so admitted, shall be specifically named in the act. The precautions we propose, appear to us most effectual against combination for the commission of fraud. Our first proposal is to widen the range from which the averages shall be taken; the second is to employ a responsible officer, acting under the authority of a public department, for the purpose of collecting the returns; but the main security we rely on as a prevention of fraud, is such an alteration of the duty as shall diminish the temptation to commit fraud. I trust I have made sufficiently clear to the House the nature of the alterations we shall propose with respect to the taking of the averages. I now approach that more important—by far the most important part of the subject—viz., what is the amount of protection we propose to give to corn the produce of this country, and the manner in which we propose to levy the duty upon foreign corn. At present the House is aware, that the duty payable upon corn is levied in this manner. At 59*s.* and under 60*s.*, the duty is 27*s.*, diminishing 1*s*, with 1*s.* increase of price, until corn arrives at the price of between 66*s.* and 67*s.*, when the duty is 20*s*. 8*d*. The duty then falls 2*s*., when corn is between 68*s*. and 69*s*. At 69*s*. the duty is 16*s*. 8*d*.

Lord *J. Russell:* Not exactly so. Between 69*s*. and 70*s*. the duty is 13*s*. 8*d*.

Sir *R. Peel*: I am reading from a printed statement, and I believe it to be correct. Between 70*s*. and 71*s*. the duty per quarter is 10*s*. 8*d*. It then falls 4*s*., when the price is between 71*s*. and 72*s*. It falls 4*s*. more between 72*s*. and 73*s*. and when the price of wheat reaches 73*s*., or upwards, the duty is 1*s*. only. The objection to that mode of levying the duty, which has been urged in various quarters, is this—that the reduction of duty is so rapid that it holds out the temptation to fraud; for instance, at 60*s*. the duty is 26*s*. 8*d*., at 73*s*. the duty is 1*s*. only; therefore between 60*s*. and 73*s*. there is an increase of 13*s*. and a decrease in duty of 25*s*. 8*d*., operating as an inducement to retain corn, or combine for the purpose of influencing the averages, if parties are inclined to combine, amounting on a single quarter of corn to 38*s*. 8*d*. So far as pecuniary inducement can go, it is impossible to be placed higher, either to retain corn, or practise on the averages. Take again prices which are nearer to each other. At 66*s*. the duty is 20*s*. 8*d*,; between 66*s*. and 73*s*. the inducement to retain corn is 7*s*. rise in price, and 19*s*. 8*d*. in duty, being a total amount of pecuniary inducement to retain corn of 26*s*. 8*d*. Take prices still nearer, between 66*s*. and 70*s*. At 66*s*. the inducement to retain corn in the hope of its rising to 70*s*. is 4*s*., and 10*s*. in duty, forming a total pecuniary inducement of 14*s*. Again, between 70*s*. and 73*s*. there is, besides the difference of 3*s*. in price, 9*s*. in respect of duty, forming an inducement of 12*s*. to retain corn at 70*s*., in the hope of its reaching the price of 73*s*. Now it has been argued that the consequence of that very rapid decline of the duty is injurious to the consumer. to the producer, to the revenue, and to the commerce of the country. It is injurious to the consumer, because when corn is at a high price (between 66*s*. and 70*s*.), and when there would be public advantage in the liberation of that corn for the purpose of consumption, the joint operation of increased price and diminished duty induces the holders to keep it back, notwithstanding the already high price and pressure in the market, in the hope of realizing the price of upwards of 73*s*., and paying a duty of only 1*s*. It operates injuriously to the agricultural interests, because it is a temptation to keep back corn until it can be suddenly poured in at the lowest amount of duty, and when agriculture loses the protection which the law intended it should possess. It is said to be injurious to the revenue, because, instead of corn coming in when it must under a fixed duty or other modifications, have been entered for home consumption, it was retained until it could be introduced at 1*s*., the revenue losing the difference between 1*s*., and the amount of duty which would otherwise have been levied. It is also said to be injurious to commerce, because where the corn is grown at a distance, in America for instance, the grower is subject to this disadvantage, that before his cargo arrives in this country, the sudden pouring in of wheat at 1*s*. duty from the countries nearer England, may have so diminished the price, and increased the duty, that his speculation may have turned out, not only a failure, but ruinous. These objection have been urged against the rapid transition and decline in the duty inversely with the price of wheat. Now our object will be, in applying the scale of duty to corn, as far as it may be possible, consistently with the principle for which we contend, to diminish the temptations to fraud, or undue holding back of corn. And the agricultural interest ought to observe what has been the effect of the law permitting the importation of corn at certain prices, at a duty of 1*s*. the quarter. In 1838, the total amount of wheat taken for home consumption was 1,728,000 quarters in the course of the year. Of that amount 1,261,000 quarters were entered at a duty of 1*s*. In 1840, the total amount of wheat entered for home consumption was 2,020,000 quarters, of which 1,217,000 quarters were taken at a duty of 2*s*. the quarter. But it is important that we should observe, not only the amount of corn taken in these years at the low duties of 1*s*. and 2*s*. the quarter, but also the period of the year at which this took place. In 1838, the corn so taken at that duty of 1*s*. was taken out one week following the 13th of September. In 1840, the corn taken out at 2*s*. 8*d*. the quarter was taken out on the 3d of September. In each of those two years by far the greater portion of the wheat taken out was at the low rates of 1*s*. and 2*s*. 8*d*.; but it was also at that critical period of the year, just when the farmer in the greater part of the counties of England had thrashed his corn; it was for the purpose of meeting the British farmer in the market when he was thrashing, or had thrashed his corn, for the purpose of producing his rent.

And this tells unfavourably, more especially to the farmer in Yorkshire, who, while compelled to defer the sale of his corn to a later period, is exposed to the disadvantage of the sudden influx of corn whenever the price shall be such as to admit it at the lowest rate of duty. This consideration alone ought to prevail with those most determined in favour of the protection to agriculture to listen with favour to any proposal that has for its object the modification of the existing laws; for it appears to me that some modification of those laws in this respect would be equally as advantageous to the agricultural interest as to any other class. I will now, with the permission of the House, proceed in the course of a few moments to read the scale of duties which I propose should be applied to corn. That scale, Sir, has been devised with a sincere desire to afford to agriculture and the agricultural interest every protection which they can legitimately expect. It has, at the same time, been devised for the purpose, when foreign corn shall be required, of facilitating, as far as possible, commercial intercourse with respect to corn, and subjecting the dealing in corn, as far as possible, consistently with the principle on which the duties are to be levied, to the laws which regulate ordinary commerce. Nothing can be more difficult than to attempt to determine the amount of protection required for the home producer. I am almost afraid even to mention the term "remunerating price," because I know how necessarily vague must be the idea which is attached to it. The price requisite in order to remunerate the home-grower must necessarily vary; a thousand circumstances must be taken into account before you can determine whether a certain price will be a sufficient remuneration or not; and the same difficulty occurs when we attempt to determine on adjusting the scale of duties. The two great points to determine, if we wish to give a just and sufficient protection to domestic agriculture, are, first, what is the price which, on the whole, taking a comprehensive view of the circumstances attending the growth of corn, and viewing the general production of the country, may be supposed to constitute a sufficient encouragement to the growth of wheat or any other kind of agricultural produce. Another element of that consideration and of that determination must necessarily be the price of foreign corn brought into the country, under competition wirh domestic produce. To attempt to draw any accurate conclusion on both of these two elements of the question must be difficult, from the various opinions that prevail, and the conflicting nature of the details. I have drawn a conclusion as well as I could, without being able to say, that I feel it to be completely accurate. But with regard to the price of wheat in this country, there are some elements, at least, towards determining what may be considered a fair average, speaking of the country at large. Now, if we take the average of prices of wheat which determines the commutation of tithes, the principle on which the Tithe Bill passed, taking the average of seven years, we find the price of wheat during those seven years to have been 56*s.* 8*d.*

If we take the average of wheat for the last ten years, we shall find that the price has been about 56*s.* 11*d.* But in that average is included the average of the last three years, when corn has been higher certainly than any one would wish to see it continue. Allowing for that excess of price, however, 56*s.* 11*d.* was the average price for the last ten years. Now, with reference to the probable remunerating price, I should say, that for the protection of the agricultural interest, as far as I can possibly form a judgment, if the price of wheat in this country, allowing for its natural oscillations, could be limited to some such amount as between 54*s.* and 58*s.*, I do not believe, that it is for the interest of the agriculturist that it should be higher. Take the average of the last ten years, excluding from some portion of the average the extreme prices of the last three years, and 56*s.* would be found to be the average; and, so far as I can form an idea of what would constitute a fair remunerating price, I, for one, should never wish to see it vary more than I have said. I cannot say, on the other hand, that I am able to see any great or permanent advantage to be derived from the diminution of the price of corn beyond the lowest amount I have named, if I look at the subject in connexion with the general position of the country, the existing relations of landlord and tenant, the burdens upon land, and the habits of the country. When I name this sum, however, I must beg altogether to disclaim mentioning it as a pivot or remunerating price, or any inference that the Legislature can guarantee the continuance of that price; for I know it to be impossible to effect any such object by a legislative enactment. It is utterly beyond your power, and a mere delusion, to say, that by any duty, fixed or otherwise, you can guarantee a certain price to the producer. It is beyond the reach of the Legislature. In 1835, when you had what some thought was a nominal protection to the amount of 64*s*., the average price of wheat did not exceed 39*s*. 8*d*., and I again repeat, that it is only encouraging delusion to hold out the hope that this species of protection can be afforded to the agriculturist. To return, however, to the subject; I again say, that nothing can be more vague than to attempt to define a remunerating price. The different qualities of land, and a thousand other considerations enter into the question; and I must say, that the same difficulty exists to a much greater extent as to determining exactly the rate at which foreign corn can be brought into this country. Here, again, you must first ascertain the quality of the corn, the cost of freight, the distance of the country the corn is brought from; all these considerations ought to enter into the calculation; and, therefore, it is almost impossible to determine what should be the exact price at which foreign corn shall be admitted into the market. With these observations I will now at once proceed to read the scale of duties which her Majesty's Government propose as a substitute for the existing scale. We propose that when corn is at 50*s*. and under 51*s*. in price, a duty of 20*s*. shall be taken, but that in no case shall that duty be exceeded. We propose that when the price is 51*s*. and under 52*s*., the duty shall be 19*s*.; and after this we propose that there should be what I should call a rest in the scale. That at the three next items of price the duty should be uniform. Thus it would be:—When the price is 52*s*. and under 53*s*. the duty should be 18*s*.; when 53*s*. and under 54*s*., 18*s*. and when 54*s*. and under 55*s*., still 18*s*. When the price is 55*s*. and under 56*s*., we propose that the duty shall be 17*s*.; when 56*s*. and under 57*s*. that it shall be 16*s*.; when 57*s*. and under 58*s*., that it shall be 15*s*.; when 58*s*. and under 59*s*., that it shall be 14*s*.; when 59*s*. and under 60*s*., that it shall be 13*s*.; when 60*s*. and under 61*s*., that it shall be 12*s*.; when 61*s*. and under 62*s*., that it shall be 11*s*.; when 62*s*. and under 63*s*., that it shall be 10*s*.; when 63*s*. and under 64*s*., that it shall be 9*s*.; when 64*s*. and under 65*s*., that it shall be 8*s*.; and when 65*s*. and under 66*s*., that it shall be 7*s*. At the three next items of price I propose another rest in the scale similar to the former. I should propose upon the next three a duty of 6*s*., that is to say, when the price is 66*s*. and under 67*s*., when it is 67*s*. and under 68*s*., and when it is 68*s*. and under 69*s*.; in each of those cases the duty would be 6*s*. When the price is 69*s*. and under 70*s*., I propose a duty of 5*s*.; when 70*s*. and under 71*s*., a duty of 4*s*.; when 71*s*. and under 72*s*., a duty of 3*s*.; when 72*s*. and under 73*s*., a duty of 2*s*.; and when 73*s*. and upwards, a duty of 1*s*. the quarter. When that price is arrived at, I propose that the duty should altogether cease. The sum of the proposition then, is this, than when corn in the British market is under the price of 51*s*. the quarter, a duty of 20*s*. shall be levied, which duty shall never be exceeded, for I am quite satisfied that it is useless to take any greater amount of duty. [*"Hear, hear," from the Opposition benches.*] I mean when British corn is under 51*s*. the quarter, that duty of 20*s*. the quarter shall be an effectual protection to the home grower; not, of course, excluding the taking for home consumption some small portion of foreign corn, but taking care that the protection shall be a valid one. Thus, when the price is 56*s*. and under 57*s*., the duty will be 16*s*., and when 60*s*. and under 61*s*., the duty will be 12*s*. Now, it is apparent that this scale will have the effect of diminishing the temptations to practising on the averages, and producing a fall of the duty, as its operation will be gradual; and when corn shall have arrived at 60*s*. or 61*s*., there will be no inducement to the holding back of corn for the purpose of getting higher prices. It is when markets are rising, and when under the present system there is a prospect of being able to force corn up to a price of

73*s.*, that alone the inducement exists to keep corn back in order to obtain additional prices. I have attempted to remove altogether that inducement to fraud by rendering it useless; and the scale is so regulated that there shall be no inducement to parties to combine to hold back corn and defraud the revenue for the sake of being able to produce a sudden reduction of the duty. I will now call the attention of the House to what has been the effect, with regard to the articles of oats and barley, of having applied the principle of more gradually reducing the duty as the price rises. In the case of wheat, where the fall of the duty was so rapid, the temptation to hold back until the lowest amount of duty shall have been realized has been very effectual, and by far the greater part of the wheat has been taken out at the least amount of duty.

In the case of barley and oats, where the fall in the amount of duty was more gradual, the same results have not occurred. In the case of oats, of 3,513,000 quarters, 248,000 quarters were taken at a duty of 1*s.* 9*d.*, 695,000 at a duty of 3*s.* 3*d.*, 243,000 at a duty of 4*s.* 9*d.*, and 940,000 at a duty of 6*s.* 3*d.* That was the effect of a gradual fall of 1*s.* 6*d.* in the scale of duties, the same principle which I propose to apply to wheat, with the exception that in no case will the fall in the duty on wheat exceed 1*s.* I consider that there is a fair ground to entitle me to assume, that, by applying that principle of the gradual fall of duty to wheat, there is a fair prospect that wheat, like oats, will be taken out at a higher rate, that the revenue will profit proportionably, and that the consumer and the agriculturist will be equally benefited by corn being taken out when the legitimate demands of the market may require it, and not to answer the objects of speculators. With respect to the other articles of grain, I propose to adopt the proportion of value and duty which I find in the present law. Valuing wheat in the proportion of 100, barley in that of 53, oats in that of 40, and rye, peas, and beans in that of 58; if it be assumed that at the price of 56*s.* for wheat the duty would be 16*s.*, then the duty on barley, when at 29*s.* would be 9*s.*; on oats, at the price of 22*s.*, there would be a duty of 6*s.* 3*d.*; and on rye, peas, and beans, at 32s., there ought to be a duty of 10*s.* 3½*d.* These are the proportions under the existing law, and I am not aware of any reason for altering them with respect to the other kinds of grain. For this reason, in adjusting the scale of duties applicable to these other kinds of grain, the proportions under the existing Corn-law will be adopted, and the scale itself will correspond with that in the relation of price. In the case of foreign oats, I should propose a *maximum* duty of 8*s.* (I do not need to enter into all the details)—that it should fall with the increase in price to 7*s.*, and then continue at 6*s.* for three items of price, that is to say, 22*s*, 23*s.*, and 24*s.* When the average price reaches 25*s.* it will be reduced, as the price increases, by 1*s.* The extremes of duty would be 8*s.* on the one hand, and 1*s.* on the other, the duty of 1*s.* being the *minimum*, and continuing so long as the price of oats exceeds 28*s.* In the case of barley, when the price is under 26*s.*, the duty I propose is 11*s.* per quarter, that being the *maximum* price. When the price is 26*s.* and under 27*s.*, I propose that there shall be a duty of 10*s.*; that when the price is 29*s*, and under 30*s.*, the duty shall continue at 9*s.*; that when the price is 30*s.* and under 31*s.*, the duty shall be 8*s.*, and so on till the price is 37*s.* and upwards, the duty decreasing 1*s.* for each gradation in price of the same amount. With regard to rye, the same proportion will be observed.

And now I must enter into a short explanation respecting colonial wheat. The law with respect to it is to this effect—that British colonial wheat and flour shall be imported into this country at a duty of 5*s.* whenever the price of British wheat is below 67*s.*; that when the price of British wheat exceeds 67*s.*, it shall then be admissible at a duty of 6*d.* I propose to give the same advantage to colonial wheat, respecting the reduction of prices at which it shall be admissible, as is given to other descriptions of wheat. But, considering that the sudden drop in the prices from 5*s.* to 6*d.*, on account of the difference of 1*s.* in the price, is at variance with the principle of the law, which seeks to establish as equable and uniform a reduction of duty as possible, we propose to make this arrangement respecting colonial wheat—that when the price of British wheat is under 55*s.*, the duty upon every quarter of British colonial wheat shall be 5*s.*; that when at 55*s.* and under 56*s.*, it shall be 4*s.*; when at 56*s.* and under 57*s.*, it shall be 3*s.*; when at 57*s.* and under 58*s.*, 2*s.*; and when at 58*s.* and upwards, it shall be 1*s.*, thus taking away that sudden fall in the amount of duty levied upon colonial wheat which takes place under the existing law, but giving to the colonial wheat that advantage in the reduction of the price which is given to other descriptions of wheat. With respect to flour, I propose to maintain the same calculation as exists with respect to wheat, so as to allow it to be admitted upon the same relative terms. I believe the House is now in full possession of the nature of the proposal which it is the intention of her Majesty's Government to submit. If you compare the reduction in the amount of duty with the existing duty you will find that it is very considerable. To those who have appeared to think that the modification which I propose to make in the existing law is of no importance, I shall only say, compare my scale of duties on the admission of foreign corn with the existing scale of duties. When corn is at 59*s.* and under 60*s.*, the duty at present is 27*s.* 8*d.* When corn is between those prices, the duty I propose is 13*s.* When the price of corn is at 50*s.*, the existing duty is 36*s.* 8*d.*, increasing as the price falls; instead of which I propose, when corn is at 50*s.*, that the duty shall be only 20*s.*, and that that duty shall in no case be exceeded. At 56*s.* the existing duty is 30*s.* 8*d.*; the duty I propose at that price is 16*s.* At 60*s.* the existing duty is 26*s.* 8*d.*; the duty I propose at that price is 12*s.* At 63*s.* the existing duty is 23*s.* 8*d.*; the duty I propose is 9*s.* At 64*s.* the existing duty is 22*s.* 8*d.*; the duty I propose is 8*s.* At 70*s.* the existing duty is 10*s.* 8*d.*; the duty I propose is 5*s.* Therefore it is impossible to deny on comparing the duty which I propose, with that which exists at present, that it will cause a very considerable decrease of the protection which the present duty affords to the home-grower, a decrease, however, which in my opinion, can be made consistently with justice to all the interests concerned. If the agriculturist fairly compares the nominal amount of duty which exists at present with that which I propose, he must perceive, that he will still be adequately protected, notwithstanding that the reduction which I propose is considerable. I certainly feel bound to say, that I think the agricultural interests of the country can afford to part with a portion of the protection they now receive, and that it is only just that that protection should be diminished. Whatever arrangement can be made, tending to facilitate the introduction of corn when corn is required, consistently with the ordinary principles of commercial intercourse, it ought, in my opinion, to be made. The protection which I propose to retain, I do not retain for the especial protection of any particular class. Protection cannot be vindicated on that principle. The only protection which can be vindicated, is that protection which is consistent with the general welfare of all classes in the country. I should not consider myself a friend to the agriculturist if I asked for a protection with a view of propping up rents, or for the purpose of defending his interest or the interests of any particular class, and in the proposition I now submit to the House I totally disclaim any such intention. My belief, and the belief of my colleagues is, that it is important for this country, that it is of the highest importance to the welfare of all classes in this country, that you should take care that the main sources of your supply of corn should be derived from domestic agriculture; while we also feel that any additional price which you may pay in effecting that object is an additional price which cannot be vindicated as a bonus or premium to agriculture, but only on the ground of its being advantageous to the country at large. You are entitled to place such a price on foreign corn as is equivalent to the special burdens borne by the agriculturist, and any additional protection you give to them I am willing to admit can only be vindicated on the ground that it is for the interest of the country generally. I, however, certainly do consider that it is for the interest of all classes that we should be paying occasionally a small additional sum upon our own domestic produce, in order that we might thereby establish a security and insurance against those calamities that would ensue, if we became altogether or in a great part dependent upon foreign countries for our supply. My belief is, that those alternations of seasons will continue to take place, that whatever laws you may pass you will still occasionally have to encounter deficient crops, that the harvests of other countries will also at times be deficient, and that if you found yourselves dependent upon foreign countries for so important an amount of corn as 4,000,000 or 5,000,000 of quarters, under these circumstances, and at a time when the calamity of a deficient harvest happened to be general, my belief is, that the principle of self-preservation would prevail in each country, that an impediment would be placed upon the exportation of their corn, and that it would be applied to their own sustenance. While, therefore, I am opposed to a system of protection on the ground merely of defending the interests of a particular class, I, on the other hand, would certainly not be a party to any measure the effect of which would be to make this country permanently dependent upon foreign countries for any very considerable portion of its supply of corn. That it might be for a series of years dependent on foreign countries for a portion of its supply—that in many years of scarcity a considerable portion of its supply must be derived from foreign countries—I do not deny; but I nevertheless do not abandon the hope that this country, in the average of years, may produce a sufficiency for its own necessities. If that hope be disappointed, if you must resort to other countries in ordinary seasons for periodical additions to your own supplies, then do I draw a material distinction between the supply which is limited, the supply which is brought in for the purpose of repairing our accidental and comparatively slight deficiency, and the supply which is of a more permanent and extensive character.

This is the proposal I am authorized on the part of her Majesty's Government to submit to the House. This is the proposal which, taking a review of the whole question, looking to the extent of the protection which, for a long series of years past, the laws of this country have afforded to agriculture, adverting to those Acts of Parliament which have assumed a given price of wheat as the basis of rent, and the foundation of great legislative propositions, considering also the importance of deriving your supply, as far as you can, from domestic sources—this, I say, is the proposal which Her Majesty's Government, prompted by no other interest but that of the country at large, driven by no other pressure than that of their own judgment, consider it most for the advantage and welfare of the people should meet with the sanction of the Legislature. Sir, this is not altogether an unfortunate period, in my opinion, for the adjustment of the question. In the first place, there is no such amount of foreign corn available to the supply of this country as need excite the alarm of those who dread an excess; and, in the next, there has been, during the period which has elapsed since the separation of Parliament, concurrently with great commercial distress, as much of moderation, of calm, and of disposition to view with moderation and calmness a proposal for the adjustment of this question, as could possibly have been anticipated. There may have been excitement—there may have been attempts to inflame the minds of the people—but this I must say, that the general demeanour and conduct of the great body of the people of this country, and of that portion of them who have been most exposed to sufferings on account of commercial distress, have been such as to entitle them to the utmost sympathy and respect. There is no difficulty, then, in the shape of violence interposed to the settlement of this question; and it appears to me to be perfectly open for legislation at the present moment. I earnestly trust that the result of the proposal which I now submit to the House, whether it be acceded to or not, will at all events be to lead to some satisfactory adjustment of the question. The adjustment we propose, we propose under the impression and belief that it is the best which, upon the whole, and looking to the complicated state of the various relations and interests in the country, we could submit for the consideration of the House, consistently with justice to all classes of her Majesty's subjects. If it is the pleasure of Parliament to affirm that proposal, it will, of course, pass into a law. If it be the pleasure of Parliament to reject it, I still hope that the question may be adjusted. Whatever may be the determination of Parliament with respect to it, I shall conclude by expressing my most earnest and solemn hope that the arrangement, whatever it may be, may be one most in concurrence with the permanent welfare of all classes, manufacturing, commercial, and agricultural, in the country.

Lord *J. Russell* did not intend to give any opinion at present on the plan which the right hon. Gentleman had explained to the House, but thought it necessary that they should come to the discussion with as much information as possible; he did not mean of a general statistical nature, but information with respect to the measure itself. It seemed to him advisable that they should have a list of the towns which the right hon. Gentleman proposed to include for taking the averages. It would make the greatest difference whether there was a small or a greater number of towns, or whether they were to be towns of large size and population or small country places. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman would be able to lay the list on the table to-morrow.

Sir *R. Peel* would endeavour to give the information by Friday. The principle determining the selection of towns would be the importance of the places. He found that a considerable number of small towns were now included, and he thought it advisable to make an addition which would render the returns more perfect. This was not done in the slightest degree with the view of influencing the averages. He altogether disclaimed the idea of any indirect operation on the averages, and he only proposed additional towns to ensure a more full and complete return.

Mr. *Cobden* would not now enter into any argument on the merits of this important question, but he should not be doing justice to himself or the constituents whom he represented, if he did not take the earliest opportunity of declaring that he had heard not with astonishment, but with regret, the proposal submitted to the House and the country by her Majesty's Government. He felt no astonishment at it, for although he had waited, in conformity with the generally expressed desire, until the administration had proposed its measure, he did not expect that that measure would be such as to benefit the country. Looking at the constitution of the present cabinet, he did not expect it. He did not expect to "gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles." Without entering into the argument now, he would venture to denounce this measure as an insult to the suffering people—a people whose patience had been extolled by the right hon. Baronet who proposed this measure—and a people whose patience deserved very different treatment from the landed aristocracy, and from the Cabinet which was the instrument of that aristocracy. This measure proved that the landed aristocracy would, if the people of England permitted them, perpetuate a system of selfish policy, tending not very remotely to the utter destruction of every interest in the country.*

The House resumed, the Chairman reported progress, the committee to sit again.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, February 10, 1842.

MINUTES.] Bills. 2ª· and *Committed*,—Borough's Improvement; Buildings Regulation; Appropriation Acts Amendment.

Petitions presented. By Viscount Melbourne, from Worcester, and other places, by the Marquess of Normanby, from Hull, and other places, by Earl Fitzwilliam, from Staley Bridge, and several other places, and by the Earl of Kinnaird, from Dundee, and other places, for the Repeal of the Corn and Provision Laws.—By a noble Lord, from Presbyterians of Athlone, to render Marriages valid between Presbyterians and members of the Church of England.—By the Duke of Richmond, from Ticehurst, to exempt Small Tenements from Rates.—From Stephen Geary, for adoption of his Fire Escape.

BUILDINGS REGULATIONS AND BOROUGH IMPROVEMENTS.] The Marquess of *Nor-*

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* THE NEW CORN LAW SCALE.

THE FOLLOWING IS A TABULAR STATEMENT OF THE SCALE OF DUTIES ON FOREIGN GRAIN PROPOSED IN SIR ROBERT PEEL'S SPEECH.

WHEAT.

PRICE.		Proposed Duty.	——
s.	s.	s.	
At 50 & under	51	20	For every quarter under 51*s.*
51 ..	52	19	
52 ..	53	18	At 52*s.* and under 55*s.*
53 ..	54		
54 ..	55		
55 ..	56	17	
56 ..	57	16	
57 ..	58	15	
58 ..	59	14	
59 ..	60	13	
60 ..	61	12	
61 ..	62	11	
62 ..	63	10	
63 ..	64	9	
64 ..	65	8	
65 ..	66	7	
66 ..	67	6	At 66*s.* and under 69*s.*
67 ..	68		
68 ..	69		
69 ..	70	5	
70 ..	71	4	
71 ..	72	3	
72 ..	73	2	
73 or above		1	

manby, in moving the Order of the Day for the second reading of the Buildings Regulations Bill, expressed his surprise at finding, that it was intended to be opposed, and that by a noble Marquess (the Marquess of Salisbury) who had attended the committee with great industry, and who had not resisted the progress of this measure and of the Drainage Bill upon either of the two former occasions, when they had been unanimously passed by their Lordships. Under these circumstances, he (the Marquess of Normanby) regretted extremely the absence of a noble Lord in India, who had formerly rendered him most essential aid, as well as of a right rev. Prelate, who had also contributed most valuable assistance. As he had now more leisure than when in office, he had taken the opportunity of personally inspecting some of the most densely crowded and poorest districts, not merely in some country towns, but, during the last few days, in the metropolis, and within the daily reach of any of their Lordships; he did not wish noble Lords who agreed with him, to harrow up their feelings by witnessing such scenes, but he asked those who were opposed to him, to visit those neighbourhoods, and by the evidence of their own senses, to ascertain how much the prevailing misery had been understated. They would, surely, then, no longer resist the progress of measures which had for their object the remedy of such crying and increasing evil. In the neighbourhood of Whitechapel, they would find court within court, and alley within alley, inhabited by thousands, to reach whom the breath of Heaven had to thread a labyrinth of pestiferous avenues, full of accumulated and disgusting filth. All this might have been avoided, if, only thirty years ago, the Legislature had interfered to promote the circulation of air and cleanliness. He had also been to Bethnal-green, accompanied by a medical man, whose evidence had been much read and studied, in the reports on which he had founded these measures, and who took great and most humane interest in the subject. There he found 75,000 persons living in that parish, 50,000 of whom resided where there was no drainage of any kind. He went into the dwelling of a weaver, who had a wife and children, the children had never been without fever from the poisonous exhalations of stagnant filth, and he was compelled to pay 15*s.* a-month for a lodging, although his wages in the present state of depression, were only 10*s.* per week. One third of his earnings went, therefore, to secure him this foul residence, amidst dirt and disease. In some districts, the evil had even recently been created by the delay of legislation, and whole streets had been run up with extraordinary rapidity directly in the teeth of the bills upon the Table. Those bills would not, it was true, remedy immediately the evils against which they were directed, but they would correct them in future, and they would be of most essential service to a class of persons least protected, and who lived in crowded, and absolutely pestiferous neighbourhoods.

BARLEY.

PRICE.		Proposed Duty.	——
s.	*s.*	*s.*	
At 25 & under	26	11	
26 ..	27	10	
27 ..	28	9	
28 ..	29	9	
29 ..	30	9	
30 ..	31	8	
31 ..	32	7	
32 ..	33	6	
33 ..	34	5	
34 ..	35	4	
35 ..	36	3	
36 ..	37	2	
37 . . .		1	27*s.* & upwards.

OATS.

PRICE.		Proposed Duty.	——
s.	*s.*	*s.*	
At 18 & under	19	8	
19 ..	20	7	
20 ..	21	6	
21 ..	22	6	
22 ..	23	6	
23 ..	24	5	
24 ..	25	4	
25 ..	26	3	
26 ..	27	2	
27 . . .		1	27*s.* & upwards.

On the question, that the bill be read a second time,

The Marquess of *Salisbury* had not intended to offer any opposition to the general principle of this bill (for he was aware that some legislative measure on the subject was called for) until he saw it in print that day. He had attended the committee on the bill, but circumstances over which he had no control had called him out of town; and he was also prevented from attending during the last short Session of Parliament. His objection to this bill was, that in its details it tended to perpetuate the very evils which it professed to remove. Another ground of objection was, that he did not think there was sufficient information on the subject before the House, and he should wish to have it referred back to the committee. It was asked why the people should like to live in those dens, as they were called, and the answer was, because they could not afford to pay for better. Any regulations which would enforce the erection of better houses, and with means of preserving greater cleanliness would necessarily increase the expense of building, and that would enhance the rent to be paid by the tenant; and, if they could not pay for the better and more cleanly habitations, they would of necessity be forced to remain in their present unclean houses, or be driven into the streets. In the town of Manchester there were, it was said, 15,000 persons living in cellars; but though many of the poorer classes in Manchester might not be as sensible of the comforts of cleanliness as those in other places, yet still it was reasonable to infer that so many persons would not prefer to dwell in such places if they could pay for better accommodation elsewhere. As to the Drainage Bill, which the noble Marquess had also introduced, he would not offer any objection to it, as he thought it was one which would do much good. It should be the policy of the Legislature to encourage buildings as much as possible, which would have the effect of lowering rents by the competition thus created; but the present bill would discourage all small buildings by rendering them too expensive. One clause in this bill was, that no persons should be allowed to dwell in cellars which had not chimnies with proper flues to them; but if this rule were applied to the 15,000 persons occupying the cellars in Manchester, to which he had referred, it would have the effect of turning them into the streets; for, as he had said, they would not have those cellars if they could afford to pay for better places of abode. If their Lordships could so improve the wages of labour as to enable the working classes to pay for better accommodation he should not object to this bill; but if the condition of the poor could not be otherwise improved this would only make them worse. The average expense of building a small house or cottage, for which a rent of nine guineas could be got was about 96*l.*, and, taking the hazard of loss and all charges, that could not be considered too high a return for such an outlay. He would, therefore, again contend, that any increase of expenditure in improving the condition of the house would not operate favourably to the persons now occupying small and inconvenient habitations, for they would not remain in them if they could afford to pay for better. He agreed with the noble Marquess that there were many scenes of great filth in many of the crowded neighbourhoods in and near the metropolis; but he must repeat that the present measure would aggravate the evils it was intended to cure. With those clauses of the bill which went to widen and improve streets he would concur, but there were so many other clauses from which he differed, that he had no alternative but to oppose the bill altogether.

The Duke of *Wellington* said, that having supported these measures in previous Sessions, he should give his vote in favour of them on the present occasion.

The Marquess of *Normanby*, said, in answer to the Marquess of Salisbury, that in the temper of the House, and the evident disposition not to change the course previously pursued, but to sanction the bills as he had again presented them, he did not feel it necessary to enter into any detailed reply to arguments which, after all, though coupled with a motion against the second reading, were merely objections to detail. He, however, entirely denied the justice of the assumption, that the poor lived in these dens, as the noble Marquess joined in calling them, because they could not afford better. His information led him to believe that speculators made exorbitant profits from the working classes being obliged to dwell in certain localities. It was these profits he meant to reduce. The instance given by the noble Marquess confirmed, rather than contradicted this view. As for living in cellars, ample time was given for removal to other dwellings, before the prohibition came into operation, which was at the end of nine years, to this extent, that no cellar at present inhabited, should continue to be so, unless it had a window, an area, and a fire-place—surely, this was not requiring too much.

The Marquess of *Salisbury* would withdraw his opposition if the noble Marquess would consent to refer the subject again to a select committee.

The Marquess of *Normanby* could give no such pledge, but would promise, that any suggestions the noble Marquess at that time made should be received with the utmost attention, in order that the bill might be rendered as unobjectionable as possible.

The bill read a second time.

The Borough Improvement Bill also read a second time.

CORN LAWS.—PETITIONS.] Lord *Kinnaird* presented petitions from ten thousand of the inhabitants of Dundee, and from many other places in Scotland, for a total abolition of the Corn-laws. On presenting these petitions, he wished to offer a few observations upon the statement made by the right hon. Gentleman at the head of her Majesty's Government last night. He had read that statement with the greatest regret. He felt certain that the measure announced by the right hon. Gentleman would be received by all throughout the country with the greatest disappointment. Before he resumed his seat, he wished to ask the noble Duke and her Majesty's Government whether a petition had been received from the relief committee of the town of Paisley and of Renfrew, praying that some of the corn, food, and other provisions now in bond at Liverpool and at Glasgow might be let out duty free to them as a relief to those unfortunate persons who had been subsisting for eight months on public charity?

The Duke of *Wellington* thought before the noble Lord asked a question about a petition, the presentation of which he was not certain, he should have ascertained whether the petition had been presented or not. He had not heard whether any such petition had been presented. That was all he could say upon the subject.

THE LATE LOAN. APPROPRIATION ACTS (1841) AMENDMENT.] The Duke of *Wellington* moved the second reading of the Appropriation Acts (1841) Amendment Bill. The object of the bill was to provide that certain sums voted the Session before last, and last Session, for certain services, should now be applied to other services. The consequence of passing this bill would be, that the accounts would be simplified and certain expenses be saved in allowing sums to be applied as one fund, instead of as two funds.

Lord *Monteagle* concurred with the noble Duke that this bill ought to pass. It was to correct a technical mistake which arose from the inaccurate wording of the second Appropriation Act, which passed last Session, an inaccuracy which was by no means attributable to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He should, however, like to see the bill printed before the third reading, because he understood an Amendment was introduced in the other House after the bill was first printed, and he was anxious to know the nature of that amendment. Before he sat down, he wished to ask the noble Duke whether there would be any objection to lay before the House the proceedings of the Government, under the Act of the last Session, with respect to the funding of Exchequer Bills? By that Act very extraordinary powers were given to the Government—though not greater powers than the peculiar circumstances of the times required. If the operation had been simply the funding Exchequer Bills, there would not have been the necessity of any subsequent Parliamentary information on the subject; but, from the print of the bill, as originally introduced in the Commons, it appeared that the first operation contemplated was partly funding and partly receiving subscriptions in money; in the progress of the bill, however, an alteration of an important character was made—namely, that of giving a power to the Government of selling stock to any amount, to complete the sum of 5,000,000*l*., which was required to be raised. That was a great power to be given to any Government, and it implied great confidence on the part of the Legislature that gave it, and good sense on the part of the party who marked his forethought in suggesting it; thus anticipating that which actually occurred; the operation of the bill would otherwise have been wholly incomplete. It gave the Government the power to go into the money market, and sell public securities whenever it thought fit; a power, in general, open to great objection, because liable to great abuse. He, however, was satisfied it had not been abused. But this being a power justified only by extreme necessity, a power of going without notice into the market, and disturbing the ordinary value of the public securities, he trusted the noble Duke would not consider he was asking anything unreasonable in requiring that there should be laid before Parliament a full account of the transactions under that bill. He begged to state, that he thought the power given was absolutely necessary; and he only wished that a similar power had been given some years back in reference to the slave compensation. Under the Slave Compensation Act there was a clause which compelled the Government to contract a loan long before the money was required. The inconvenience of that course was extreme. The course taken in the present instance was a much better one; still, inasmuch as it gave a great latitude to the discretion of the Government, he hoped the noble Duke would not object to lay before the House a full account of the manner in which the trust had been exercised.

The Duke of *Wellington* did not think there would be any objection in giving the noble Lord whatever information he might think proper to require, still he would suggest to the noble Lord the expediency of his putting his request in the form of a motion.

Bill read a second time.

Roman Catholics in India.] Lord *Fitzgerald*, in laying before their Lordships a statement of Mr. Blackbourne, the magistrate and collector of the district of Madura, in the presidency of Madras, respecting the treatment of certain Roman Catholics by that gentleman, begged to observe, that as he had been represented to have said on a former occasion that Mr. Blackbourne's statement was unsatisfactory, he felt it fair that he should now state that that observation did not apply to Mr. Blackbourne's statement, but that, on the contrary, so far as that gentleman's statement went, it ought to be considered satisfactory. The noble Lord then moved, that there be laid before the House copies of any further communications received since the 4th of October, 1841, relating to the Madura district, in the presidency of Madras, with respect to places of Roman Catholic worship.

Lord *Clifford* wished that the official communication received by the Government from Lord Ellenborough upon this subject should be laid before Parliament.

Lord *Fitzgerald* considered it would be a very inconvenient precedent to accede to the noble Lord's wish. He thought the noble Lord had better first peruse the papers which had been just laid on the table before urging his request to have any further documents produced.

Papers laid on the Table.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, February 10, 1842.

Minutes.] Bill. 2°· Loan Societies.

Petitions presented. By Mr. Busfeild, from Bradford, by Sir J. Easthope, from Merchants and Manufacturers of Leicester, by Mr. Scholefield, from Birmingham, and by several other Members, from a great number of places, for the Repeal of the Corn-laws.—By Mr. M. Philips, from Confectioners of Manchester, against the introduction of Confectionery from the Channel Islands.—By Mr. T. Duncombe, from Easingwold Union, for the Amendment of the New Poor-law.—By Mr. Hastie, from Paisley, for an Inquiry into the Condition of the inhabitants of Paisley.

Railways — (Ireland).] Mr. *F. Shaw*, seeing the noble Lord, the Secretary for Ireland in his place, wished to ask him one question. It would be recollected, that the hon. Member for Roscommon asked, the other night, whether her Majesty's Government had made up their minds to adopt any plan for railways in Ireland. As he understood the noble Lord's answer to that question, it was, that several plans which had been forwarded to him had been referred to the consideration of the Government, who had not as yet come to any decision upon them, either for their adoption or not. He would be glad if the noble Lord would now say whether his impression was correct, and if the noble Lord was able to assure him that the plans were now under the consideration of her Majesty's Government, and that no decision had as yet been come to either one way or the other?

Lord *Eliot* replied, that the right hon. Gentleman was perfectly right as to what he said or intended to say the other night. The plans of several parties for railways in Ireland, submitted to him, had been sent for the consideration of Ministers; he was not prepared to state what the decision of Government would be; but he had added, on his own responsibility, and from what he knew of the sentiments of the right hon. Baronet (Sir Robert Peel), that Government would not sanction any plan which would require an advance of public money, or saddle the country with any guarantee as to the amount of interest.

STIPENDIARY MAGISTRATES—(IRELAND).] Lord *John Russell* had understood that there had been a reduction of the number of the stipendiary magistrates in Ireland; he would ask how far that reduction had gone, and whether it was intended to carry the reduction further?

Lord *Eliot* replied, that eight stipendiary magistrates had been reduced, and it had been contemplated to make a reduction of ten, but in consequence of the representations of the Lords-Lieutenant of counties, that the services of the others could not be conveniently dispensed with, the number had been limited to eight; and it was not the present intention of her Majesty's Government to carry the reduction farther. He begged to add, that the reduction had been carried on in such a manner that no selection had been made, but those were reduced who had been most recently appointed.

CORN-LAWS — MINISTERIAL PLAN.] Colonel *Sibthorp* rose, to ask the right hon. Baronet, the First Lord of the Treasury, a question relative to the resolutions which he had laid on the table last night. Among those resolutions, he did not hear one on a subject of great importance, and he would ask whether it were the right hon. Baronet's intention to make any improvement or alteration with regard to the mode in which the duties are now taken upon the importation of corn; in fact, whether it were his intention to make the duty payable when corn was brought into this country, or when it was taken out of bond?

Sir *Robert Peel* said, it was not his intention to make any alteration in the period at which the duties on corn were paid.

Colonel *Sibthorp* would call the attention of the committee to that subject.

Mr. *Labouchere* would put a question on a point which materially affected Ireland. The right hon. Baronet was probably aware that there was a difference in the law regulating the importation of flour into England and into Ireland. The importation of flour into Ireland was wholly prohibited, whilst it was admitted upon payment of certain duties into England. If the right hon. Baronet had the same law for Ireland as for England, flour would be admitted into Ireland at the same duties as into England. Was it the right hon. Baronet's intention to re-introduce into his Corn Bill a clause to prohibit the importation of flour into Ireland under all circumstances, or did he mean to have a uniform trade in the two countries?

Sir *Robert Peel* had reserved this for separate consideration. He believed, that the restriction was in a separate bill.

Mr. *Labouchere*: No; it was a clause in the bill.

Sir *Robert Peel* said, perhaps the right hon. Gentleman would allow him till Monday to give a reply: he had meant to reserve the point for separate consideration.

THE PUBLIC PARKS.] Mr. *Ewart* asked the noble Lord in the office of the Woods and Forests, whether it was the intention of her Majesty's Government to throw open Richmond Park and Kew Gardens?

The Earl of *Lincoln* replied, that there was no present intention to make any alteration with respect to those grounds.

Dr. *Bowring* inquired whether any change or alteration was contemplated with reference to the not very intelligible order given to the gate-keepers in St. James's-park, by which persons having parcels were not allowed to pass through? It had occurred to himself once to be sent back because he had a bundle of petitions and a book in his hand, and the order was the cause of great public inconvenience.

The Earl of *Lincoln* said, that the order in question was not made by the Woods and Forests, but by his Royal Highness the ranger of the park, and he knew nothing more of the order than seeing it in the papers.

TEXAN TREATIES.] Sir *R. Peel* had promised to give an answer to the question which the learned Gentleman the Member for Cork (Mr. O'Connell) asked the other evening, as to our relations with Texas. There were three treaties between Texas and this country, which had been duly signed by the agents of each party. One was a treaty of commerce; the second related to the debt; and the third to the slave-trade. The two first treaties, as to the commerce and debt, had received the sanction of the senate of Texas. The third, relating to the slave-trade, owing to the gentleman charged with that treaty not having arrived in Texas before the separation of the senate, had not received the sanction of that body. As the agreement was, that all the three treaties should be simultaneously ratified, and as the slave-trade treaty had not received the sanction of the senate, none of the treaties had been ratified.

REGISTRATION OF ELECTORS.] Mr. *T. Duncombe* asked when the right hon. Baronet would produce to the House the bill alluded to in the Speech from the Throne for the registration of electors?

Sir *R. Peel* replied, that the bill was prepared, and would be introduced at as early a period as possible, but he did not think it would be advantageous to enter upon the discussion till by the settlement of other questions it could be fully discussed.

Mr. *T. Duncombe* said, all he wished was, that the bill should be laid on the Table, that the country might have plenty of time for its consideration, and that the second reading should not be pressed till after Easter.

Sir *R. Peel* promised that there should be ample time for the consideration of the bill.

DISTRESS IN BOLTON.] Dr. *Bowring* had to call the attention of the House to a report which had been laid on the Table at the close of the last Session of Parliament, and which had created in the borough which he had the honour to represent both astonishment and annoyance—astonishment that an individual, deputed by her Majesty's Government to inquire into the state of families suffering distress, disease, and death, should, in a public document, have denied facts of public notoriety; and annoyance that he should have gone out of the way in order to attribute to gentlemen, some of whom were the most honourable and most benevolent in existence, and who had engaged in an inquiry into the misery which surrounded them, and of which they had evidence on every side, motives other than those which influenced them, which were indeed no other than to ascertain the facts as to the existing distress, with a view to its removal. The hon. Member, the seconder of the Address, had allowed frankly, fairly, and boldly, that the statements made on that (the Opposition) side of the House of the sufferings of the people, and of the great and extensive misery on the part of the manufacturing population, were not only not exaggerated, but that those statements were frightfully true. To that sentiment the right hon. Baronet the Premier, and the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department had responded, and had declared that the existing distress was severe and of an alarming character. He might appeal also to the hon. Member for Newark, for Canterbury, and for Sandwich, who had lately visited Bolton, who had seen with their own eyes the sorrows and sufferings of the manufacturing people, who had heard with their own ears their tales of misery, and who, no doubt, when appealed to, would come forward and confirm his statements. He had brought forward three cases of a peculiarly distressing character; he had chosen those instances from a multitude of others that had been placed in his hands; he was willing to allow that these melancholy facts had occurred some time ago, and he did attach some blame to the gentleman who had placed these statements in his hands, that he had not attached to the document the dates when the cases occurred. The earliest cases as they stood on the list were undoubtedly the most remote in point of time; but the state of things was aggravated now, and from that period to the present the distress had not been diminishing, but increasing. The cases which were few two years ago had now become numerous; and he could bring evidence that at the present period not only was there a general want of food, but that many thousand individuals had not the means wherewith to supply the ordinary cravings of nature. He had brought forward the case of a person named Pearce, and it was averred that he had been starved to death, and the jury had recorded that verdict. That was one of the cases to which the right hon. Baronet (Sir James Graham) had specially called the attention of the Poor-law commissioners, and Mr. Mott had embodied in the report which had been presented to the House, the evidence which he supposed had disproved the facts which had been brought to the notice of the House. He had to complain, and the people of Bolton had to complain, of the manner in which the inquiry of Mr. Mott had been conducted. Evidence had been brought before him which he had refused to receive, and the most important facts had been stated in his presence, which he had either refused to record, or which he had not recorded in the document which had been laid upon the Table of the House. With reference to the death of this man, the following questions had been put to the relieving officer, with regard to the position in which this individual had been found. After describing the condition in which Pearce's family was found, the question was asked "Was that the state in which we found the family when we visited them? His answer was "Precisely so!" Was it your opinion at the time "that the man had died from want?" The answer was, "That is still my opinion," but in Mr. Mott's report, no notice is taken of this important testimony. He called the attention of the House to this point, on account of the excitement produced by Mr. Mott's report, and which had led to a reinvestigation of the cases referred to. He, himself, though he had taken no part in that inquiry or examination, had afterwards gone over the ground, had examined witnesses, had seen many individuals, whose names he was about to introduce to the notice of the house, and he ventured to assert, that after this examination, the House must agree with him, that the facts stated were substantially true, and that they could not be better employed than in finding a remedy for evils and miseries, such as those he was about to describe, which were not solitary examples. Mr. Mott had asserted, in his report, that there was no evidence of this man having died of want; and he had gone so far as to declare, that the family was in a comfortable condition. He had visited the family. Mr. Mott had declared, that the family, at the time of Pearce's death, received 9*s.* a week for their support—but the woman, Mrs. Pearce, had denied to him that they had ever obtained that sum. He (Dr. Bowring) did not attach any value however to the widow's evidence. She was in a state of complete mental imbecility. She was not able to give an account even of the present earnings of her family. When he went to her, she had informed him that she had received about 2*s.* a week, but her daughter, who was in a condition almost equally imbecile, stated that the amount was only 1*s.* 10*d.* per week. Ought Mr. Mott to have been satisfied with the statements of an imbecile old woman? alarmed as she probably was by his presence. Why did he not refer to the books of those who employed the family? It was proved by the most irrefragable evidence, that the maximum of their receipts was only 4*s.* a week, and the books to which Mr. Mott had access, had recorded that the amount did not exceed 3*s.* per week. He had found one individual after another desirous of offering evidence that a scene of greater misery had never been witnessed than that presented by the house of this family. What was stated by the relieving officer? He said—

"That he was waited on by Mr. Coop, a comb-maker, who said, that a man residing near his house was starving to death: he went and found him dead."

He said—

"I felt the corpse, and it was still warm. I noticed the cellar to be in a very wretched state. Through the wall of the back part of the cellar, I perceived dirty filthy water oozing through the crevices of the bricks, which I afterwards found proceeded from a midden-stead adjoining the cellar. There was a nauseous smell, and which I considered very unhealthy. All the furniture in the cellar was a small three-legged table, an old chair with scarcely any bottom, and a three-legged stool such as children use; there was a small bedstead, on which was placed some sacking containing shavings; the shavings were quite visible through the sacking. There was no covering. The bed was quite wet with damp, and stunk with filth—so much so, that I gave orders for it to be burned, which I believe was done after deceased was buried. The corpse of Pearce lay out on a loom, without any covering, but Mrs. Coop lent them a pair of sheets. The value of the furniture altogether, I should consider, would not fetch two shillings if sold. I asked the woman and her daughters whether they had any food. They said, 'They had not tasted any that day.' I went to my house, and brought them a quantity of broth, which they all devoured very voraciously. I was in the cellar whilst they partook of it, and one of the daughters, immediately after she had taken it, began to vomit very much; which I attributed to an excess of appetite, and being kept without food so long previously. I may add, that previously to partaking of the broth, they began to quarrel amongst themselves which had the greatest portion. I reported the case, and they were duly relieved. On the Tuesday following, the committee sat, and they were ordered to be relieved. I now refer to the book in which the 'distressed cases' are entered, and I find that they were relieved with a grant of three shillings per week. I find the following entry:—Pearce, Ellen, widow, Howell-croft, to receive three shillings per week for an unlimited period;' and the following entry in the remarks:—'Husband supposed to have died from want.' I inquired into the earnings of the whole family, and found they did not exceed three shillings per week. I have since several times visited the old woman, Ellen Pearce, and find that she is of very weak intellect; and any statement she might make is not fit to be taken as evidence; and her daughters are the same. It appears that a dullness of intellect afflicts the whole family. I went to the Coroner's Inquest for the purpose of giving evidence, but not being called upon, I did not do so. Had my evidence been taken, I do not know how the Jury could have done otherwise than returned a verdict that the deceased died from want."

What said Mr. Webster, the town missionary of Bolton? He said:

"My duty is to visit cases of sickness and distress. On Monday, the 24th of February last but one, from information I had received that a man had died from want in Howell-croft, I went there and made enquiry. The cellar of the deceased was pointed out to me, and on entering I saw the deceased dead, and laid out on his loom. I found the whole of the household requisites to consist of a small three-legged table, a chair, almost without a bottom, a stool, and a bed with some sacking on: the whole of which were worthless, not worth carrying away; the bed was very filthy. I reported the case to the Benevolent Society, who gave the family 5s. I have seen the entry made in the Benevolent Society's book, and find Pearce's case is entered 'Died from want of food;' and this was my full impression immediately after I had examined into the case On inquiring into their earnings I found they did not exceed three shillings per week. I have frequently visited and relieved the case since, and I consider them all—that is, the old woman (Mrs. Pearce) and her two daughters, to be of such very weak intellect that it approximates very closely to insanity, and that they are totally incapable of giving evidence that could be depended upon. Whenever I have conversed with them I have always left them fully impressed that they were labouring strongly under a degree of insanity."

And yet Mr. Mott chose to rely on the testimony of this poor and almost insane old woman, in opposition to that which was tendered on every side. Another party (one Ann Beswick) spoke of this man in the following terms:—

"About three weeks previous to the death of Pearce, I stood against my own door-step and saw Pearce coming towards my house. There are three steps up to my house. He looked very wan, and pale as death, and was so weakly, that to get on to my house floor he had to go down on his hands and knees and creep up. He had been in the habit of weaving for us some months before, and I had missed him for a month about, on the day I am now speaking of. When he got in, he said, "Nancy, do, bless you, make a sup of warm tea, for I am dying for want." I made him some tea and a little toast, and he devoured it very greedily. When he had done it he told me all that he had had for three or four weeks back; he had had nothing but a bason of gruel per day to subsist upon. In about a quarter of an hour after the old man had had the tea, he was seized with sickness, and I had to obtain the assistance of neighbours, for I thought he was dying. We reared him up in chairs with pillows, and in about three quarters of an hour he came round. I then asked him why he clammed himself to that degree, and he said as he did not belong to Bolton he could not get relief. He pulled up his trowsers and showed me his legs, and they appeared nothing but skin and bone; and it was frightful to see him. He was taken home by my husband, and I and his wife went to the overseers' office to represent the case to them. We saw Bridge, the assistant to the relieving officer, and told him the case, and he was very saucy, and said we had better mind our own business. I gave in the name of Pearce to the officer myself, for although his wife was present when the officer asked her husband's name, she could not tell, and desired me to do so. The officer said, he should visit the case, but whether he ever did so or not I never ascertained, and I never heard anything more until about three weeks afterwards, which was, that he was dead. I heard this the same night that he died, and went to the cellar. I there found them in a most shocking state, and the cellar smelled so much that I could not remain in it. He was laid out on the loom, with a sheet over him. I noticed in the back cellar there was a sewer, or midden channel, ran through, and the floor was covered with nauseous filth and water. All the goods in the house were a broken three-legged table, a stool, chair, and the bed, made of sacking, without covering. I went again on the Monday morning, and turned down the sheet to look at the corpse, and there were hundreds of creeping filth upon him. I pointed out the filth to his wife, and she appeared to be quite vacant."

Similar evidence, no less distressing was given by a neighbour, Mr. Coop. One of the overseers gave the following evidence:—

"I was one of the overseers of the poor at the time of the death of Pearce. I recollect going with Mr. Naisby to the cellar at the time that Pearce lay dead on a pair of looms. From what I saw and heard from the old woman and her two daughters, I felt convinced that the old man died from want. The old woman and her daughters appeared of very weak intellect."

Now, notwithstanding this evidence, Mr. Mott, in the report which was laid before the House, declared that this family was well off. He (Dr. Bowring) confessed that the result of the inquiry had produced a great change in his mind with reference to the Poor-law commissioners; his confidence in them was wholly shaken, and he should deliberate long before he delivered over the suffering poor to their tender mercies. And now to the case of James Bristol; and what was the evidence with respect to this case? Mr. Skelton, a neighbour said:—

"I recollect, about two years ago, Mr. Naisby calling upon me to visit the case of Bristol. On getting into the house, we inquired of the woman where her husband was, not knowing that he was dead. She stated that he was up stairs. Mr. Naisby replied, 'I want to see him;' and she then said, 'He is dead. Mr. Naisby then went up stairs and looked at him. The woman had a very bad leg, and was quite unable to walk. There were two children lying in the corner of the house, on a bit of straw placed on the flags. One child was very much afflicted with the St. Anthony's fire, and all the other children were very ill and sickly. I asked Bristol's wife what food he had had lately, and she then stated that her husband had asked, the day before he died for a bit of cheese and bread, but that she was unable to procure him any. An old woman, a neighbour, stated, that Bristol had been clammed to death.'"

The wife of Bristol gave the following evidence:—

'My husband died about two years ago. I recollect, when he was laid out dead, Mr. Naisby then coming to visit us. My husband was laid out on the necessary door, up stairs, covered over with a sheet, which a neighbour had lent us. I was lame myself at the time, and could not walk. For three weeks previous to my husband's death we had nothing but three shillings per week coming in; and we had to live sometimes on potatoes, sometimes on porridge, but had only one meal a day, which we generally made about four o'clock in the afternoon. I think it was for a fortnight that we had to confine ourselves to one meal a day, sometimes having porridge and sometimes potatoes. When Mr. Naisby found us in this state, we got more food; otherwise I believe I should have lost more of my children, for we had got as far distressed as we well could be to be alive. About five months previous to my husband's death I had a child sucking, which died; and I feel sure that its death was occasioned by my not being able to give it suck, for want of sustenance. I had no bed, bedding, or anything whereon to lay, when Mr. Naisby visited us. I had only a stool whereon to sit, for myself. I had no shop where I could get provisions at; they all refused to give me credit. My husband wished for a bit of cheese and bread the day before he died, but I was unable to procure him any."

The evidence of Mr. Wood is as follows:—.

"I was a guardian at the time of Bristol's death, and recollect the case being brought before the board of guardians, and Mr. Naisby remarking to Mr. Benjamin Brown, the relieving officer, who was then present, 'Why, that poor fellow has died from want, Brown;' to which Brown made answer, 'Yes, I believe he has."

Betty Brown spoke as follows:—

"At the time of the death of Bristol, I laid him out on the top of a necessary door. I assisted to undress him, he having died with his clothes on, in which he had lain for many weeks, having nothing besides to keep him warm; when I cut his trousers' legs and stocking-legs open, there were large quantities of creeping filth, which had eaten quite into the flesh, and his legs were nothing but putrid flesh and scabs. He had nothing but straw to lie upon, which was spread on the floor.' One of the children had the St. Anthony's-fire, and the rest were all more or less very sickly and bad. They all slept together in one room, and the wife of Bristol had a great hole in her leg, and could not walk or assist her husband; but after she had received relief, and had got bedding, she began to come round. I recollect Mr. Naisby coming down, when Bristol was laid out on the necessary door, and I then told him the man had died for want, and I knew such to be the case."

The third case was that of a man named Kirkman, but as Mr. Mott did not deny the facts which were brought forward, he would not weary the attention of the House by referring to it any further. But he had not attacked the Poor-law guardians—he did not say that they were cognizant of these cases. He believed that they were not, and he was bound to say that, whatever might be the benevolence of the guardians, they had no sufficient means of relieving the aggravated distress which surrounded them on every side. Mr. Mott, however, had not satisfied himself upon an inquiry into these three cases, to which the attention of the Poor-law Commissioners had been drawn by the right hon. Baronet, but he chose to enter into a work of supererogation and entirely beside that to which his notice was directed; Yes! he chose to enter into the question of the general distress existing in the borough of Bolton. In December, 1840, a number of excellent and benevolent men, struck with the scenes of calamity which surrounded them, determined to institute an inquiry into the extent of the prevailing distress. Mr. Mott, in his report, has ventured to throw on these gentlemen the reproach that they had gone into the investigation —not to relieve the distress—not on the interest of the sufferers, but to aid the progress of Anti Corn-law agitation. He said:

"Their object was not explained at the time, but it would appear to have had reference to the anti-corn-law meeting which was held in the Temperance Hall, Bolton, on the 2d, of January last. At that meeting statements were made by those gentlemen who had instituted the inquiry, by which the distress was attributed to the operation of the duty on corn. No attempts were made by them to relieve the distress which was said to exist, and no application was made to the guardians or the relieving officers until the 15th of January, a fortnight after the statements had been used at the meeting, when a deputation of gentlemen waited on the guardians, and left a list of upwards of three hundred families, who were described to be in great distress. The information so obtained was handed over to the relieving officers, and the facts elicited by them are deserving of notice, as exhibiting the evil tendency of all such voluntary attempts to seek out cases of distress. The relieving officers found that the cases had been grossly misrepresented to the committee; that only one out of the whole number was considered as attended by circumstances requiring relief; that in this case the guardians granted relief of 2*s.* weekly, in money, and supplied the family with bedding and a bedstead, as they were found to be lying on the floor; and, to show how slightly the poorer classes estimate the possession of this last article of furniture, on visiting the family three months afterwards, the relieving officer found their bed placed on four chairs and some boards, and the bedstead remained unused in an adjoining room."

He begged to say that no man had done more for the relief of the poor—for the substantial relief of the poor than those gentlemen, whom Mr. Mott had thought fit thus to calumniate; and he thought that he could not do better, if the House would permit him, than to read the words in which those gentlemen had repudiated the charge brought against them. They said:—

"We deem no apology or explanation requisite from us for having inquired into the condition of our distressed and destitute neighbours. The inquiry originated in a purely charitable and benevolent intention; and although the information was made public at an Anti-Corn-law tea party, we can truly say the inquiry was neither instituted for that purpose, nor was any such service contemplated at the time the inquiry was made. By making public the extent of suffering, we were in hopes some effort would have been made, as upon the previous winter, when near 3,000*l.* was raised by private subscriptions, towards alleviating the distress; but, from the great increase of the distress, as well as the greater inability of many of the middle classes again to subscribe, it was eventually thought more deserving the attention of the board of guardians, than to be dealt with by private charity. Having done what we conceived to be an act of duty towards our fellow parishioners, and for which we received the thanks of the board of guardians, we cannot but express our surprise and regret that a public functionary, holding the high and responsible office of assistant Poor-law commissioner, as well as special government commissioner for inquiry into some particular cases of destitution, should so far have forgotten the trust reposed in him, and so far have wandered from the obvious line of his duty, as to impute unworthy motives to the parties who instituted this distressing inquiry: nor has he been satisfied with imputing motives; he has ventured without personal investigation of his own, without any effort to ascertain the truth of the statement made, to accuse us of partisanship, and of misrepresentation, leaving the impression that we had invented or exaggerated tales of distress, in order to serve a political and party object. We deny the accusation, and complain of the levity and carelessness in which it has been made. Since that report has been printed, we have felt it incumbent on us to re-institute a minute inquiry into all the cases now to be found. Each family has been visited by two respectable ratepayers, who are ready to vouch for the correctness of their statements; and of the 308 families before reported, forty-eight are broken up, and no longer to be found. Some have entered the workhouses, two families are gone to Australia, others are dispersed among their friends and relations. The condition of the remainder is in no respect better than last year—they remain living and suffering testimonies to the truth of our statements—sixty-nine families are receiving parish relief, and this, in addition to the earnings of the parties, when rent is deducted, will only leave 1*s.* 5½*d.* per head per week for each individual to exst upon; their beds, bedding, and clothing, are in a worse condition than before."

He would not go into further details, but he would only add this important fact from the document which he had quoted, in which the guardians declared,

"From the best information we can obtain, we have good reason to believe, that Mr. Mott himself never visited a single case, and certainly avoided putting himself in communication with those who with much labour had undertaken the painful duty of examining into the sad condition of the people."

He did not believe, that it was the purpose of the right hon. Baronet, when he sent Mr. Mott to Bolton, that he should conduct the inquiry in the way in which he had done, because he had left a feeling in that place,—that his object was to suppress the truth, and to give evidence only of such a nature as would meet his own views. And now, if he turned his attention to the general question, and especially to the increased mortality in the manufacturing districts, his mind was most painfully impressed. He saw by a report on the health of the navy, that the decrease in the mortality in that service had been very great. In 1779, among seamen, the proportion of deaths was one in eighteen; in 1811, it was one in thirty-two; but in the years for which the last return had been made, from 1830 to 1836, the mortality had been reduced to one in seventy-two. We had to contrast this state of things—this diminished number of deaths in the maritime service with the great general increase, and especially with the increase in the seats of manufacturing labour. The mortality in this country, he could not doubt, had been greatly increased by the want of sufficient food for the people: in 1840, as compared with 1839, there had been a very considerable augmentation in the number of deaths. From the year 1838 to 1839, the number of deaths was one in 46·52; in 1840, one in 44·56; but he begged the House to look at the alarming increase in the manufacturing districts. In Leicestershire, in 1839, the number was one in 48·27; in 1840, it was one in 39·89. In Nottinghamshire, in 1839, it was one in 47·74; in 1840, it was one in 35·61; in the West Riding of Yorkshire, in 1839, it was one in 44·47; in 1840, it was one in 42·92. In Lancashire, it was, in 1839, one in 35·71; in 1840, it was one in 31·99. Mr. Mott had endeavoured to show, that the number of uninhabited houses was attributable to the over-building which had taken place in that town and its neighbourhood. Now, he held in his hand a document which showed, that throughout the country there had been an enormous increase in the number of houses which were unoccupied. In a statement drawn up by Mr. Porter of the proportion of uninhabited to inhabited houses, it appeared that in 1811 the number was 2·77 per cent., in 1821 it was 3·27 per cent., in 1831 it was 4·66 per cent., and in 1841 it was 5·58 per cent. In Bolton, since 1835, 1836, and 1837, the whole loss sustained by empty houses, removals, and other causes, had been immense. At that period scarcely a house remained unoccupied for a month. Building had been stopped, population had increased, but the number of uninhabited houses was progressively augmenting; one house in nine is unoccupied, according to Mr. Mott's confession. In 1836, of the rates levied amounting to 2,062*l.*, only 88*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* was lost by removals, allowances for poor tenants, and empty property;—in 1841 more was lost than the whole amount of rates in 1836, for while the rates laid amounted to 12,750*l.*, the losses were 2,963*l.* from removals, unoccupied houses, and unrecoverable rates. So great was the proportion of unoccupied houses and shops, that in the poor-rates collected from March 1840, to 1841, on two shillings in the pound, there was a deficiency of 1,000*l.*, making a diminished rental of 10,000*l.*, independently of which 1,000*l.* had been remitted to those unable to pay; so that another 10,000*l.* must be deducted from the average rental of 70,000*l.* per annum, which was the estimated rental of shops and houses independently of factories, founderies, land and other property. What had been stated with regard to the poor-rates at Bolton? The amount laid in Great Bolton in three years, namely, 1835, 1836, and 1837, was 11,900*l.*, while for the year ending in March 1842 the amount levied was 16,740*l.*; so that in the last year the amount levied was 4,800*l.* more than in the three years preceding 1837, and, this, notwithstanding the amount of 4,000*l.* had been received from charitable contributions. In Little Bolton, the amount levied in the six years, from 1834 to 1840, was 6,307*l.*; while in the single year to 1842, no less than 7,000*l.* had been levied. Now, what was the present condition of Bolton? He would refer to a return which was made up of the Poor Relief Society in that place. The number of persons relieved from the 22d December to the 22d January last, was 6,167, the average income of each being 11¾*d.* per week—or less than 1¾*d.* per head per day for finding them with food, clothing, firing, and to pay their rent. The application of 828 persons had been rejected, on the ground of the insufficiency of funds, and the average earnings of these rejected persons was only 1*s.* 9¼*d.* per week, while of the total number of applicants amounting to 6,695 individuals, the average earnings were but 13*d.* per week; and yet Mr. Mott had ventured to talk of the generous and even profuse expenditure per week for their relief. Of 50 mills usually employing 8,126 men, 30 were either unemployed or working short time. Of trades not exclusively dependent on factory work, such as Iron-founders, Carpenters, Bricklayers, Stonemasons, Tailors, and Shoemakers, it was found, that of 3,100 employed in 1836, only 1,730 were now employed. In December last there had been a survey made of the people of Bolton, and 1,003 families were then visited, consisting of 5,035 persons, whose net earnings amounted to 339*l.* 15*s.* 7*d.* per week. They received parish relief and donations amounting to 52*l.* 8*s.* 5*d.*, making 392*l.* 4*s.* The amount required for the payment of their weekly rent, if paid, was 82*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.*, and thus it appeared that the amount left for clothing, food, &c., was 310*l.* 0*s.* 8*d.*, which was 1*s.* 2½*d.* per head per week. Among the whole of these families 950 had beds, and in the whole 1,553 beds were found; 716 were filled with flocks, the remainder with straw, chaff, and other such matter; among the 5,035 persons there were 466 blankets, or about 10½ persons to each; 53 families were wholly without beds; 425 persons were sleeping on the floor; there were found amongst the whole 2,876 chairs, 1,380 tables, 642 stools; 511 of these families existed by the habit of constantly pledging their small possessions, and 609 families had no change of linen whatever. This survey had been conducted by persons who expressed their readiness to attest the veracity of their statements. He had himself gone over this town, accompanied by an hon. and gallant Gentleman accustomed to witness the consequences of war, who had seen towns besieged, and all the other miseries and privations which belonged to such events, but he said that he had never witnessed scenes in which wretchedness so deplorable was depicted. In many of the streets of Bolton there was not a single inhabitant—many of the inhabited houses were without any furniture whatever—hundreds of families slept wholly on the ground without bed or bedding, and there were thousands who had no supply of daily bread to keep existence together, and to whom the use of animal food was altogether unknown, They had a feeling that that House might do something to relieve their distresses. They were innocent, desirous of procuring labour, and exerting themselves to procure it. They had heard that many countries were willing to receive labour at their hands, and to pay for that labour the superfluous food which those countries produced, and they inquired in their honest anxiety and their most excusable discontent, "Is this state of things to continue?" In conclusion, he moved for copies of any communications addressed from Bolton to the Home-office, during the late recess, upon the subject of Mr. Mott's report.

Sir *J. Graham* said, that if the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had put, in the first instance, a question concerning the motion with which he concluded his speech, a great portion of his valuable time might have been saved, as he had no intention to offer any opposition to the motion. The hon. Member for Bolton, in speaking of something which had been done before the late prorogation upon the subject, said, that he (Sir J. Graham) had been guilty of supererogation. He (Sir J. Graham) however must say, that he was satisfied, from the best information which he could obtain, that he believed certain statements which had been made by hon. Gentlemen had been exaggerated. The hon. Member had now thought it necessary to go into a great many facts. He (Sir J. Graham) however should avail himself of his advice on this subject, and would not, therefore, be guilty of supererogation by following him throughout all these details after they had been already discussed for a third time. He thought, that it would be much better if the discussion upon this question were postponed until both sides of the House had been put into possession of everything connected with the case. He should not resist the motion, but he should propose to add to it the following words—viz., "together with any reports presented by Mr. Mott in answer to any such communications." Before, however, he sat down, he begged the House to recollect, that though he did state it to be his conviction, that certain facts had been exaggerated, yet he did not deny the truth of the statement, that great distress does exist in Bolton. Upon this point he would be very sorry to be misunderstood. He would beg to move the amendment.

Mr. *Ainsworth* wished to bear his testimony to the existence of great distress in Bolton; indeed, in the whole course of his life, he never knew distress so prevalent. With respect to the cases alluded to by his hon. colleague, he must say, that with respect to the case of Pearce and Kirkman the facts were most deplorable. The family of Pearce were in a state of imbecility, for the questions which were put to them by various parties were answered by the most opposite replies. With respect to the relieving officer, he was aware, that relief would have been afforded them if he had not conceived, that they were in the receipt of certain wages. When the relieving officer called upon them the second time, and discovered their destitute situation, he lost no time in administering to their relief. Indeed the relieving officer did whatever he could, after he had discovered their real situation. That relief had been since constantly given. This same statement, he believed, would hold good with respect to the family of Bristol, who were also relieved upon their case being made known. That family, he believed, were now in some employment in the borough. He regretted exceedingly the distress which had existed; but as far as he could judge, being intimately connected with the Poor-law guardians, relief had been granted, as far as it was possible to do so consistent with the rules and regulations laid down. Subscriptions had been raised amounting to upwards of 4,000*l*. for the poor of Bolton. He must bear his testimony to the manner in which relief had been administered by the Poor-law guardians to the poor of Bolton. They have even gone on their own responsibility, and have given out-door relief where they deemed it necessary, and have not consulted the commissioners. With respect to the relieving officers, he was quite sure that in every instance they had done all they could. He thought that Mr. Mott went much out of his way, indeed, to condemn the conduct of many individuals in the borough, who were solely actuated by a proper feeling of charity and good-will towards their poorer brethren. He, therefore, thought, that Mr. Mott did very wrong in making those remarks. He did not think that the distress was in the slightest degree exaggerated. There was, however, one point upon which he hoped he would be excused making an observation. His hon. colleague had stated that there were fifty mills in Bolton, thirty of which were unemployed. He had just left that borough, and he must say, that he believed the whole of the mills were at present employed, but working short time. He thought it right that those things should be fairly and honourably stated. He believed that there might be one at the present moment unemployed, but it arose from causes not connected with the general condition of the country. With respect to the number of houses unoccupied in the borough, there were certainly about 1,500 or 1,600 in such a state now, and have been in this state for some time.

Lord *J. Manners* said, he did not believe that the distress of Bolton had been at all exaggerated. He went himself down to the borough to inquire into the truth of this fact, being unwilling to believe that such a state of things could have existed. As an Englishman and a Christian he was not disposed to believe this distress. He had, however, seen that distress, and he must bear testimony to the truth of the statements which have been made by the hon. Members for Bolton on the subject. He hoped, however, that some measure would be adopted that would permanently relieve this state of things.

The motion, with the amendment of Sir James Graham, was agreed to.

Business of the House.] Mr. *Brotherton* was convinced that the opinion was daily gaining ground that the system, of sitting until such late hours was anything but advantageous to legislation, or beneficial to the public. He had often brought forward the motion before, but had not been successful in inducing the House to agree to it, but as he saw many new Members present, he was in hopes that his present proposition would be attended with better success. He did not object to a debate which commenced before twelve o'clock being terminated that night, but he was strongly opposed to business occupying considerable time being brought forward after midnight. In 1614 an order of the House was made, that no new business should be brought forward after twelve o'clock at noon. To show the change that had taken place in the feelings and circumstances of the times. he had now to bring forward a motion to prevent new business, if opposed, being brought forward after twelve o'clock at night. Another order of the House was passed, that no Member should leave the House before the Speaker, and that he should leave first, and that the other Members should follow. If this system obtained now, they would certainly ensure the attendance of at least 100 Members. The hon. Member concluded with moving, "That no opposed motion be brought on and decided after twelve o'clock at night, unless 100 Members be present."

Sir *R. Peel* observed, that as the hon. Member had stated, that there were many new Members in the House, and that he was anxious to take their opinion on the subject, would it not have been advisable to have waited and let the new Members have some experience of the present system? He (Sir R. Peel) confessed that he saw no particular advantage that would arise from adopting the motion of the hon. Member. Circumstances and habits had altered since the time that the House used to meet at ten o'clock in the morning, and if the House reverted to that custom, there must be a total change in the mode of conducting business. As long as they met at four o'clock, and did not commence public business until five, the motion, if carried, would prove a great impediment to the discharge of public business. It would be highly inconvenient to allow one Member to throw an impediment in the way of business; but at present, if five or six Members objected to new business being brought forward, or expressed themselves in favour of an adjournment, he, for his own part, was, and should continue to be, willing to yield.

The House divided—Ayes 26; Noes 200: Majority 174.

List of the AYES.

Aglionby H. A.
Blake, M.
Bowes, J.
Bowring, Dr.
Brodie, W. B.
Busfeild, W.
Crawford, W. S.
Duncan, G.
Forster, M.
Fox, C. R.
Gibson, T. M.
Harford, S.
Hatton, Capt. V.
Hindley, C.
Johnson, General
Marsland, H.
Morris, D.
O'Brien, W. S.
O'Connell, D.
O'Connell, M. J.
Scholefield, J.
Scott, R.
Strickland, Sir G.
Ward, H. G.
Wason, R.
Wawn, J. T.
Williams, W.

TELLERS.

Brotherton, J.
Ewart, W.

List of the NOES.

Acland, T. D.
A'Court, Captain
Ackers, J.
Adare, Viscount
Ainsworth, P.
Aldam, W.
Alexander, N.
Allix, J. P.
Antrobus, E.
Armstrong, Sir A.
Ashley, Lord
Astell, W.
Baillie, Colonel
Baillie, H. J.
Baird, W.
Baring, rt. hon. F. T.
Barnard, E. G.
Baskerville, T. B. M.
Beckett, W.
Bernal, R.
Bodkin, W. H.
Boldero, H. G.
Borthwick, P.
Botfield, B.
Bramston, T. W.
Broadley, H.
Broadwood, H.
Brocklehurst, J.
Bruce, Lord E.
Bruce, C. L. C.
Buck, L. W.
Buller, C.
Buller, Sir J. Y.
Carnegie, hon. Capt.
Charteris, hon. F.
Chute, W. L. W.
Clive, E. B.
Clive, hon. R. H.
Collett, W. R.
Colvile, C. R.
Corry, right hon. H.
Courtenay, Viscount
Cowper, hon. W. F.
Cresswell, B.
Cripps, W.
Crosse, T. B.
Currie, R.
Damer, hon. Colonel
Denison, E. B.
Dickinson, F. H.
Divett, E.
Dodd, G.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Douglas, J. D. S.
Drummond, H. H.
Duncombe, T.
Dundas, D.
Eaton, R. J.
Egerton, W. T.
Eliot, Lord
Elphinstone, H.
Escott, B.
Ferguson, Colonel
Feilden, W.
Ferrand, W. B.
Fitzalan, Lord
Fitzroy, Captain
Ffolliott, J.
Forbes, W.
Forman, T. S.
Fuller, A. E.
Gaskell, J. Milnes
Gill, T.
Gladstone, rt. hn. W. E.
Gordon, hon. Capt.
Gore, M.
Gore, hon. Capt.
Goulburn, rt. hon. H.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Greenall, P.
Greene, T.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Grimston, Viscount
Grogan, E.
Guest, Sir J.
Halford, H.
Hamilton, J.
Hamilton, W. J.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Harcourt, G. G.
Hardinge, rt. hn. Sir H.
Hardy, J.
Hastie, A.
Hawes, B.
Hay, Sir A. L.
Heneage, G. H. W.
Henley, J. W.
Herbert, hon. S.
Hodgson, R.
Hogg, J. W.
Houldsworth, T.
Hope, hon. C.
Hope, G. W.
Horsman, E.
Howard, hn. C. W. G.
Howard, hn. E. G. G.
Howard, hon. H.
Hughes, W. B.
Inglis, Sir R. H.
Jermyn, Earl
Johnson, W. G.
Johnston, A.
Johnstone, H.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Kemble, H.
Knatchbull, right hn. Sir E.
Knight, H. G.
Knight, F. W.
Labouchere, rt. hn. H.
Leicester, Earl of
Lennox, Lord A.
Lincoln, Earl of
Litton, E.
Lockhart, W.
Lowther, J. H.
Lygon, hon. General
Mackenzie, W. F.
Maclean, D.
Mahon, Viscount
Mainwaring, T.
Mangles, R. D.
Manners, Lord J.
March, Earl of
Marjoribanks, S.
Marshall, W.
Marsham, Viscount
Martin, C. W.
Maule, right hon. F.
Miles, P. W. S.
Milnes, R. M.
Mitchell, T. A.

Mordaunt, Sir J.
Mostyn, hn. E. M. L.
Mundy, E. M.
Muntz, G. F.
Murray, C. R. S.
Neeld, J.
Neville, R.
Nicholl, rt. hon. J.
Northland, Viscount
O'Brien, A. S.
Palmer, G.
Parker, J.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Peel, J.
Philips, M.
Pigot, Sir R.
Plumridge, Captain
Powell, Colonel
Praed, W. T.
Pringle, A.
Pusey, P.
Rae, rt. hon. Sir W.
Rashleigh, W.
Reade, W. M
Reid, Sir J. R.
Richards, R.
Rous, hon. Captain
Russell, J. D. W.
Ryder, hon. G. D.
Sanderson, R.
Scarlett, hon. R. C.
Scott, hon. F.
Shaw, right hon. F.
Sheppard, T.
Smith, rt. hon. R. V.
Somerset, Lord G.
Somerton, Viscount
Somerville, Sir W. M.
Stanley, Lord
Stewart, J.
Stuart, W. V.
Strutt, E.
Tancred, H. W.
Taylor, T. E.
Taylor, J. A.
Tennent, J. E.
Thesiger, F.
Thornely, T.
Tufnell, H.
Tuite, H. M.
Verner, Colonel
Vernon, G. H.
Waddington, H. S.
Wakley, T.
Whitmore, T. C.
Wilson, M.
Wortley, hon. J. S.
Wrightson, W. B.
Young, J.

TELLERS.

Clerk, Sir G.
Fremantle, Sir T.

Judicial Resignations — (Ireland and Scotland).] Lord *John Russell* rose to move for copies of the letters of the late Lord President of the Court of Session in Scotland, and the late Chief Justice of the Queen's Bench in Ireland, resigning their judicial offices. He made this motion in consequence of the circumstances under which those resignations appeared to have taken place. He said "appeared to have taken place," because the letters for which he moved might give some colour to the transaction which he was not aware of. He thought it of the greatest importance that that House should pay rigid attention to whatever related to the judges. They were placed in a high station, to which they were appointed for life, they were paid large salaries, and retiring pensions were allowed to them when unable to perform their duties. The performance of these duties was generally attended with very great respect and observance on the part of the public, and on the part of Parliament; so that, however some might object to that principle of the constitution which rendered the judges independent, it could not be said that the judges had reason to complain of the mode in which they were treated by Parliament or the public. Such being the case, and the inconveniences which some very considerable writers had pointed out having been incurred for the sake of placing the judges in an almost irresponsible position, he thought the public was entitled to expect from them a total and entire devotion to their judicial duties, and that nothing of a party political character should attach to them while they held the station of judges. Now, circumstances had occurred in the cases to which he referred, which certainly were *primâ facie* of a suspicious character; for no sooner was one set of Ministers changed for another, when two of the highest judicial personages, one holding the office of Chief Justice of the Queen's Bench in Ireland, and the other the office of Lord President of the Court of Session in Scotland, resigned their offices, and accepted retiring pensions. He said, that on the face of it, it would appear that one of two things had taken place — either that these judges, during the period in which they retained their offices, had been for some time unfit to perform their duties with that vigour and intelligence which were requisite—or that, being still in full possession of their powers, they had resigned their judicial situations into the hands of those whom they considered their political friends, and obtained retiring pensions, thereby depriving the public of the use of those talents which ought to be devoted to its service. That one of the two cases had happened appeared to be probable, for otherwise it would be extraordinary the inability of two persons holding such high situations should be precisely cotemporaneous with the accession of a new Ministry. This might be explained by the letters for which he had moved. It might appear to have been the case, however singular and strange, that in September or October, 1841, such an infirmity or illness had attacked both these eminent persons as led to the resignation of their offices, and rendered them unable any longer to perform their duties. If such should appear from the letters, or from any statement that could be made in that House, then all suspicion would be at an end. At the same time there were other circumstances that made it more necessary for such an explanation to be given. One was with respect to the Chief Justice of the Queen's Bench in Ireland, that for some time he had seldom attended circuit, or performed the duty of a Judge going circuit. Another was with respect to the Lord President of the Court of Session, that his near relation had been appointed to the vacant seat. These circumstances were calculated to strengthen the suspicion, that those judges had retained their situations, in order to deliver them into the hands of their political friends. He said, that considering the eminent situation which the judges filled, the purity with which they ought to maintain their character, the manner in which they ought to stand clear from all political partiality, it would be a great misfortune if judges were found to abuse their situations, and take advantage of the act by which they could not be deprived of their places unless for misconduct, and by address from both Houses of Parliament—so far to regard, not how the duties of the judicial bench were to be performed, but in what manner the Treasury Bench in that House was occupied. He thought, that would be a great misfortune, and he should be sorry if he found no sufficient explanation on the subject. He did not think, as the case at present stood, that any charge, or anything approaching to a charge, was to be made against the executive government on the subject. It was their duty, when the vacancies took place, when the resignations were placed in their hands, to ascertain, in the first place, that they were made by persons who could not properly go on with their duties, and in the next place to see that those vacancies were filled by persons of sufficient learning and ability. He had nothing to say on these points, having no doubt that those duties were performed. With respect to the persons nominated to the vacancies, their names were sufficient guarantee for their high character, legal ability, and integrity, and these he was not going to question. It was not, therefore, to make any charge against the executive government, that he wished to ask for these letters. It was that notice might be taken of the subject, which might operate as some warning to persons in high judicial situations, not to allow themselves to be bent by political partiality, but to consider themselves as judges totally removed from all partisanships, whether Whig or Tory. With these few observations, he begged to move for the papers to which he had referred.

Sir *James Graham* said, that until the noble Lord rose for the purpose of explaining the reasons which had induced him to bring forward this motion, and after the best reflection he could give to the noble Lord's notice, he had remained in the gravest doubt as to what could be the motives or intentions of the noble Lord in bringing it forward. If the noble Lord had any accusation to make against her Majesty's Government, if he had had any doubt of the purity of their conduct, or any allegation to bring forward touching the motives which had induced them to give effect to the resignations of those judges, then he should have been perfectly prepared to meet the noble Lord, and should not have hesitated one moment as to the course he ought to pursue. But the noble Lord said that with respect to the executive government he had nothing whatever to allege—that they had no option in receiving the resignations duly attested—the fact being undoubted, and the inability of the parties to perform their duty being ascertained, that they had no alternative but to accept their resignations and exercise the best discretion they could in advising the Crown as to the manner in which the vacancies should be filled up. The noble Lord had no complaint to make of the mode in which that duty had been discharged by the executive government; and in bringing forward his motion it now appeared that it was not for the purpose of reflecting on the character of those venerable judges who had lately retired from presiding, the one over the highest court of common law in Ireland, and the other over the judicature of Scotland—but as a warning to future judges not to follow their example. He had not the honour of knowing either of those eminent persons, but he should say that their conduct, so far from being held up as a warning, had left a bright example to be followed by their successors in office. Their ability, their learning, their impartiality, could not be impugned, and on the testimony of the bar of the countries where they had sat upon the Bench was, a complete answer to the insinuations of the noble Lord. With respect to Chief Justice Bushe, he saw on the other side of the House a learned Gentleman, who he believed in latter years had been much opposed to the chief justice in politics, and who would admit that the address presented to Chief Justice Bushe, on his retirement from the bench in Ireland, by Mr. Dickson, the father of the bar, was agreed to unanimously by that learned body. It expressed their great admiration for the talent and conduct of the learned judge at a time when no motive of fulsome adulation could be assigned for its presentation, and its tenour was such as left nothing to be desired by that venerable person on his retirement into private life. He was not going to pass an eulogium on Chief Justice Bushe, but if he were not mistaken, he was one of those who had been most distinguished in Ireland in their day—and had stood prominently forward without losing by comparison, with Mr. Grattan, Mr. Curran, Lord Plunket, and others of the greatest eminence. Recollecting this, he could not but regret for the sake of Chief Justice Bushe, that at his advanced age and in his present position, having retired into private life, the noble Lord should have come forward to hold up his conduct as a warning to future judges who were told not to follow his example. With respect to the Lord Predent of the Court of Session, he had not the honour of knowing him, but, he believed, that for thirty-seven years he had been on the bench and for thirty years had presided over that court. Until the present moment, whatever heat of party might have existed in Scotland, he had understood that the integrity of judical conduct of the Lord President had never been for one moment called in question. It had sometimes occurred to his thoughts, when reflecting on the reasons for this motion, that the noble Lord might be anxious to inquire whether the present Government, following former example, had at all entered into negotiations with the learned judge: that the noble Lord might be anxious to ascertain whether the present Government had employed the Solicitor-general of Scotland to negotiate with the Lord President with respect to the amount of retiring allowance. He thought the noble Lord might have been anxious to know whether some expectant Solicitor-general, waiting to be Lord Advocate, had negotiated with the Lord President respecting a clause to be introduced into a bill before Parliament to secure his retiring allowance, upon condition of his immediate resignation; that the Lord Advocate might be made Lord President, and the negotiating Solicitor-general succeed to the post of Lord Advocate. He thought that a supposition of some such proceeding might have aroused the constitutional jealousy of the noble Lord, or that his suspicions might have been excited by his own past experience in office. In thinking that such might have been the motives of the noble Lord, he felt strong in the consciousness of not having been a party to any transaction of that description, and that he could give the most positive negative to any statement of that kind. He could state on the part of the Government that neither directly nor indirectly was any communication made to the Lord President with respect to his retirement from office, or the amount of his compensation. The noble Lord said, it was of the utmost importance that that House should pay attention to the resignations of the judges. And the noble Lord's jealousy was not confined to Scotland. Of course the noble Lord extended his jealousy to Ireland. It was not only a Lord Chief Justice that had retired; they had heard of a Lord Chancellor retiring not upon the accession of a Government to office, but when a government was virtually condemned—condemned by Parliament and the country; and the continued existence of that Government must have been known to the Members of it themselves to be impossible. They were not left to vague surmise as to the circumstances under which the Lord Chancellor had retired from the bench in Ireland. They were not left to suspect whether the Government had offered some inducement to that noble person to retire from the judgment-seat when he was quite competent to continue upon it. There was no doubt upon the matter. It was not to be investigated or inquired into, as with regard to the motives which induced Chief Justice Bushe to resign. The circumstances which induced Lord Plunket to resign were known to all the world, having been stated by Lord Plunket from the judgment-seat, in terms which he would now read to the House. The noble Lord thought it of vast importance, that there should be no indirect communications. Let the House hear what Lord Plunket said with respect to the communications which had been made to him:—

> "With regard to the particular circumstances which have occasioned my retirement I wish to say a few words. I think it a duty which I owe to myself, and to the members of the bar, to state, that for my retirement on this occasion I am not in the slightest degree answerable. I have neither directly nor indirectly sanctioned it, and in giving my assent to the proposal which was made to me of retiring, I was governed solely by its having been requested of me—on the ground of public duty?—nothing of the kind—as a personal favour to do so by a person to whom I owe snch deep obligations, that an irresistable sense of gratitude made it impossible for me to do anything but what I have done."

Now he (Sir James Graham) simply assured the House and the country, with respect to the Lord President Hope, and the Chief-Justice Bushe, that no member of the Government, no Solicitor-general of Scotland, no Lord-lieutenant of Ireland, had asked either the one or the other to retire from office. The Government never tampered with those learned persons; and they would have scouted such tampering if the Government had dared to attempt it. Their resignations were freely offered —they were accepted by the Government on public grounds, and on public grounds only—they were accepted freely and unconditionally; and the Government had, to the best of their judgment, advised the Crown as to the manner in which those offices should be filled up. He would not, therefore, unless compelled by a vote of that House, consent to a course so unusual, that it would stamp with something like disgrace those venerable persons. He would not consent to the production of those letters. If he could produce those venerable persons themselves, shaken, perhaps, somewhat with age, but strong in conscious integrity, and bright with the hope of honest fame, mingling with still brighter hopes, if he could so produce them, he knew—such was the generous feeling of that House—that all the angry contentions of party would subside at their presence, and the desire would be unanimous not to curse their retirement with the pangs which a motion like this might inflict. They would be treated with respect and reverence. Even the noble Lord would regret, that in a hasty moment he had been betrayed into making such a motion as this.

Mr. *Fox Maule* said, that he cordially joined in the last wish expressed by the right hon. Baronet. He wished, so far as Scotland was concerned, that they could produce in that House the venerable gentleman who had just retired from the office of Lord President. He should be sorry to be led, in following the right hon. Baronet, to use any expression which could pain that venerable gentleman; but if he did so, it would be from the right hon. Baronet having dwelt so broadly on the cause of his retirement, and having denied, that it was attended with circumstances which could not only justify the suspicions of his noble Friend, but carry out those suspicions into the breast of every man in Scotland. It was perfectly well known by every Scotchman—he saw hon. Gentlemen sitting opposite who knew it well—that the late Lord President had been, for many months before his retirement, incapable of performing his duties. He would ask the Lord Advocate, whom he saw opposite, how often the late Lord President had presided in the Jury Court of Scotland? He would ask, whether, before the late Government brought forward the motion, which led to their resignation, the Lord President had not, on the assembly of the judges, stated, that his infirmity was on him, and that he must give up to other judges the performance of his duties in the jury courts? Was that the first instance of his having done so? By no means. The right hon. Baronet referred to the bar of Scotland as bearing evidence of the manner in which the Lord President had discharged his duties. It was by the forbearance of that bar, that the learned judge in question had been enabled to hold his position to so advanced a period. Hon. Gentlemen in this country might imagine, that because the Lord President had presided in the Court of Session, without great fault being found with his judgments, without falling into errors of memory, or other errors incident to age, his functions were efficiently performed. But it should be recollected, that in Scotland there were written pleadings and written defences, which the judges took home and formed their judgments upon in the retirement of their chambers; whilst the English judges listented to *vivâ voce* pleadings, and gave judgment from their notes, and, therefore, could not discharge their duties so easily as if they had written pleadings to examine. The right hon. Gentleman had alluded to another case, which was so notorious, that it was surprising a Gentleman of such high public virtue, as the Secretary of State for the Home Department, should have let it slumber so long. He alluded to the case of Lord Corehouse, who retired from the bench about two years ago. During the whole of that period, the indignation of the right hon. Gentleman had slept upon it. He could not plead ignorance of it, for printed papers containing the whole evidence on the subject, had been transmitted to him and others. However, the right hon. Gentleman now accused the late Government of making a bargain for the retirement of Lord Corehouse. What were the facts? Lord Corehouse, in the execution of his duties, was struck with a paralytic stroke, which rendered him incapable, in the opinion of his medical advisers of ever resuming his judicial functions. At that time, when the Government had no prospect of retirement—when there was no appearance of danger in the political horizon—it became a question with Lord Corehouse, whether he should apply for leave of absence from his court, which must have terminated in his resignation, or immediately retire from his judicial functions. The circumstances which weighed with the mind of Lord Corehouse was, that there was a bill then before Parliament regulating the retiring salaries of the judges, and that if he retired immediately, he would not be likely to come within the provisions of the bill. He wished, by taking advantage of the leave of absence, to prolong his judicial existence, so as to come within those provisions. The question, therefore, arose, whether it were not better that he should retire at once, not to make room for a successor at a time when the power of appointment was in danger of lapsing, but to allow his situation to be at once effectually filled up, and whether, for that purpose, a clause might not be introduced into the bill, so shaped as to give him the benefit of the retiring salary, according to its provisions. He had no hesitation in admitting before the public, to whose judgment he appealed, that he was a party to that transaction. He had compassion on a judge who had served a long time upon the bench—who was struck with an almost fatal disease—whose mind, indeed, was then in such a state that he was hardly fit to be treated with at all, and for the purpose of allaying his feelings, and at the same time of rendering a court efficient whose efficiency had been much questioned, he did assent to the introduction of that clause. The right hon. Baronet had thought it worth while, in order to gain a party cheer over his noble Friend, to misrepresent the whole circumstances as a party political proceeding, but forgot how much obloquy in that case it threw upon himself; for if the transaction was blameworthy, or savoured of an attempt to render impure the channels of justice, why did not the right hon. Gentleman bring forward the charge two years ago? The right hon. Gentleman shook his head. He would leave it to the public to judge between the right hon. Gentleman's charge and his answer. He avowed himself openly a party to the transaction, and he ventured to say, that in the impartial judgment of the public, he would stand in a better position with regard to it than the right hon. Gentleman. He had said that the late Lord President of the Court of Session was not in a state to discharge all the duties of his office. He had stated that he could not discharge the duties of one particular court over which he ought to preside. He would go further and say, that that venerable man lingered on the bench till those who knew what he had been pitied what he had become. He would say, likewise, that latterly some of his judgments had excited deep and irrepressible disgust in the public mind of Scotland. He alluded especially to one judgment, in a case, perhaps, the most important that had ever come before a judicial tribunal in Scotland, and on which the Lord President of the Court of Session was called on to give an opinion. It was a case in which the feelings of the people of Scotland were deeply involved—he meant the Strathbogie case. When the learned judge in question had to give judgment in that important case—by which the public mind had been so much excited—he so far allowed his temper to get the better of his discretion—to adopt the most charitable construction—that instead of delivering his judgment with the calmness and dignity which would render it effective in removing the doubts as to the respective powers of the civil and ecclesiastical courts—and at all events tend to allay the angry feelings that had been excited—he compared the general assembly of the Church of Scotland, composed of men who stood high in the affections of the people—using a simile, borrowed from the noble Lord opposite—he called that venerable body "thimble-riggers." He compared the General Assembly, in his judgment, to men who tossed at race-courses, and cried "Heads, I win; tails, you lose." He defied any one to deny, that those terms had been used by that learned judge on the bench. Would any gentleman in Westminster Hall tell him, that if such ribaldry had been made use of by Lord Chief-justice Denman, it would not have met with deep and general disapprobation, to say the least of it? He attributed it to no wish on the part of the Lord President to hurt the feelings of any party in Scotland, but he did say, that so much of temper had mixed itself up with that of judgment, that it had created in Scotland a deeper feeling of indignation, and had done more to widen the breach between the Civil and Ecclesiastical Courts, than any other circumstance. In Scotland they had a narrow circle, and were apt to speculate much among themselves about some parties in that circle. The right hon. Baronet, the Member for Tamworth, could set at rest one suspicion, or report, which prevailed there. It was said, that the Lord President Hope had tendered his resignation in 1834 or 1835, during the right hon. Baronet's former administration. He could scarcely credit it. Still, for the sake of the learned Lord's character, he hoped this opportunity would be taken to deny it. There was another circumstance more confirmatory of this statement than mere report, and that was the statement of the learned Lord himself. When remarking on a judgment given by Lord Eldin, than whom there was no greater ornament of the Scottish bench, but whose mind was affected before he retired from office, the late Lord President observed how much it was to be regretted, that a judge should fall into such a condition, and said, that he at least had taken steps to ensure, that it should not happen to himself, for he had placed his resignation into hands that would use it whenever his faculties showed symptoms of decay. As his noble Friend had, so did he absolve the executive government from being a party to this transaction. All that they could do, when the resignation was placed in their hands, was to appoint, as a successor, such person as they thought most fit for the situation. He quarrelled not with their appointment; but then he must say, that the circumstances that attended the resignation had occasioned very great conversation in Scotland—it certainly had excited very great suspicion. He was by no means sure, though he was quite ready to acquit the Government of having any hand, act, or part in the resignation—he was not, he said, quite sure, that the right hon. Baronet's defence would allay the suspicion which existed in Scotland.

Sir *W. Rae:* When he saw the motion standing on the paper in the name of the noble Lord, he thought it was intended as an impeachment of the conduct of the Government, but that was disclaimed, and it turned out to be nothing more than a miserable attempt to cast reflections upon those who had long served their country in high and most important offices, an attack upon defenceless men—that was the avowed object of the noble Lord, and it was much strengthened by the speech to which the House had just listened. He (Sir W. Rae) was astonished that any man who had resided so long in Scotland as the hon. Gentleman who spoke last had, should come forward and pour coals of fire upon the head of a venerable servant of the public, who was about to retire into quiet life: it was a course he did not expect to have seen taken by him. It was the more ungenerous, because the charges were wholly unfounded. The mind of the venerable person whose name had been so often alluded to was as sound as it was ten years ago. [Mr. *F. Maule* had never stated that his mind was unsound.] He had certainly understood the hon. Gentleman to state, that the mind of the venerable judge was in such a state, that he was incapable of performing his duties. He (Sir W. Rae) said, that such a statement was unfounded in fact, for the Lord President had performed his duties up to the hour in which he had sent his resignation. By an act which he had had the honour of passing through the House, the heads of the courts in Scotland were required to preside in the Jury Courts; that of course was the duty of the Lord President, and he would affirm that that duty he had always performed—every case which properly came before the first division had been tried by the venerable judge. It was true that he was afflicted with a lameness in his limbs, which rendered it a work of difficulty for him to get up the stairs to his court. He knew also that the venerable judge was afflicted with a degree of deafness. He knew also that he was seventy years of age, and that he had officiated upon the bench for thirty-eight years: all that he knew; but he also knew, that he had always most ably performed his duties. With respect to the judgment upon the Church question, it was not likely that it would be pleasing to the hon. Gentleman, but he and the House were aware that the judges were bound by oath to administer justice to all. As to the words attributed to the venerable judge on that occasion, he would only say that until they had been stated in that House he had never heard of them. But it was to be borne in mind that upon that occasion he was addressing certain persons who had been guilty of a gross breach of the law, and that the duty of reprimanding them had been cast upon him in virtue of his office; and he would say, without fear of contradiction, that a more able address than that delivered by the venerable Lord President had never been heard in the court. Allusions had been made to addresses of the bar to retiring judges. A testimonial of that kind of the most flattering description had been sent to the venerable judge upon his retirement from the faculty of advocates — a body comprising men of the first talent, of great independence, and of all shades of politics—it was agreed to unanimously, and he would read it to the House.

"Sir,—The dean and faculty of advocates on occasion of your retirement from the situation of Lord President of the Court of Session, are desirous of expressing their sense of the distinguished ability and integrity with which you have discharged the duties of that high office. During a period of more than thirty years, you have devoted your eminent talents and great attainments, with unwearied and successful assiduity, to the administration of justice. Your judicial character has been adorned by learning and eloquence of no ordinary kind, while the strict impartiality and high principle which have guided your judgments have commanded universal confidence and respect. The faculty feel gratefully bound to acknowledge that they have uniformly experienced at your hands that courtesy and kindness of demeanour which are so necessary to assist the exertions of the advocate, and which, as your example has shown, only confer additional dignity on the judicial station. The faculty trust that this sincere expression of their esteem and veneration for your character may not be unacceptable to you at a time when you are quitting the employments and distinctions of public life, and they earnestly hope that you may enjoy in your retirement the repose and happiness which will be the fit reward of your long labours and your many virtues."

That address was passed not only unanimously but with cordiality. Who, then, would assail the character of a man enjoying such a character from those who knew him best—a man who was now preparing himself for that great change which at his years must soon arrive? With respect to what had been said as to negotiation or bargain with him for the appointment of a successor, he could only say that he had heard of it for the first time that evening. As to the fact of his resignation being placed in the hands of his son, he believed it was true, but that he had watched the mental faculties of his father was also true within his own knowledge, and had it been necessary the resignation would have been tendered without regard to party or personal advantage; the character of the son was secure from calumny from the fact that he had twelve years ago been elected unanimously to the high station of Dean of Faculty. He would only further say, that a more unjust or ungenerous accusation against any public servant he had never heard.

Mr. *O'Connell* would not have taken any part in this discussion, had he not been appealed to by the right hon. Baronet. He confessed he was of opinion, that this motion had not been brought forward in a manner calculated to insure it as much success as it would have met with, had the noble Lord not omitted another still stronger case that had occurred in Ireland, of a particular judge, of whom he would say nothing more at present, than that he should bring his case before the House upon notice. The right hon. Baronet had appealed to his testimony in favour of Chief Justice Bushe, insinuating, as he understood the right hon. Gentleman, that it would have weight with the House, inasmuch as that learned judge was opposed to his (Mr. O'Connell's) politics. Now Chief Justice Bushe ought not to be opposed to any man in politics. He did not think it was saying much in Chief Justice Bushe's praise to allege, that he was opposed to any man in politics. The right hon. Baronet must have meant since his accession to the bench, for previously that learned gentleman and he agreed perfectly well in politics. [Sir *J. Graham:* While he was Solicitor-general, from 1805 to 1822?] Yes; he had always been the advocate of the Catholic claims. He began by opposing the union; he was the comrade and rival of the Grattans, the Currans, and the Ponsonbys of that time; superior to them in many qualities, as an orator, he was inferior to them in none. He had the happiest vocabulary he had ever heard; he was an excellent lawyer, and an accomplished gentleman. He was all this; but the Charles Bushe that was then was not the Charles Bushe that had recently resigned his seat upon the bench, since the Tory Ministry had come into power. He did not blame the judge. It was the decay of nature, a beautiful and mighty wreck, but, notwithstanding that, a wreck. He had adhered to the bench, after he had ceased to be useful, with a desperate and unhappy tenacity, until he could procure a successor more congenial to his political sentiments, than he was likely to have obtained, had he resigned a little sooner. He spoke of the matter with regret. For the last four or five years, Chief Justice Bushe did not sit at *nisi prius*. Although it was his duty, he allowed that duty to devolve upon a junior judge, thereby giving evidence of the consciousness of his own fading powers. Otherwise, why desert his duty? He certainly went circuit, but in Ireland it happened, that judges forfeited a portion of their salary, if they did not. At the Maryborough assizes, which lasted five days, he took two of those days to decide a few cases of appeal from the registry, leaving thirty-five cases undecided, while the other business of the assizes was almost entirely undone. He did not impeach the integrity of Chief Justice Bushe. No; he did not allege even that he had shown the slightest partiality in his decision of those registry cases. But he did allege, that his faculties had so forsaken him at the time, that he was incompetent to the discharge of his judicial duties. Everybody had observed that, and his best friends had urged him to resign; but he refused to do so, and held his place, until there was a change of Administration. It was melancholy, that these things should occur, while they showed with how much constitutional jealousy they ought to be viewed. Chief Justice Bushe, by his last act, proved, that he was opposed to him (Mr. O'Connell) in politics, and, therefore, to the popular politics of Ireland. It was an act which bespoke a foregone conclusion. He did not see why there should have been such a clamour of triumph on the other side of the House at the noble Lord's motion, when these facts were unquestioned, and, in his mind, undoubted. Addresses from the bar had been spoken of, but was there, let him ask, any great weight to be given to addresses from the bar? Was there no fellow-feeling on the bench to influence the getting up and signing of those addresses, or was it quite prudent for a barrister in one court, to refuse to be a party to an address to the judge of another? Besides, few would like to assail a man in decrepitude and decay. After all, too, he believed, that the assembly which agreed to compliment was not very numerous, and Mr. Dickson, the father of the bar, was nearly alone. It was with pain he felt himself compelled to say these things. He had not been stingy in his praise of those qualities which had distinguished Chief Justice Bushe as a lawyer and a gentleman, and he deeply lamented that he should form one of those unhappy examples of partisan tenacity to the bench, which prevailed in this country. Another instance of a similar character, a glaring instance, had occurred in Ireland, of which, as it would shortly be the subject of debate in that House, he would say no more; but as regarded this, he conceived that the noble Lord had acted perfectly right in bringing it as a constitutional question under their consideration, and he sincerely hoped, that the discussion which had arisen upon it would have the effect of terrifying or persuading the friends of judges to get them to resign when they were no longer competent to discharge their judicial functions, and above all, to prevent them from continuing in office until the moment when, by resigning, they could afford to a particular political party some political advantage.

Mr. *Shaw* said, that after the eulogy which had been passed upon the character of Chief Justice Bushe, he had only to make a very few remarks with reference to what was matter of fact. In all that the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite had said, regarding the eloquence and eminence of Chief Justice Bushe, he fully and cordially coincided, but from what had fallen from him regarding the declining abilities of that learned judge, he totally disagreed. He believed, that until the last circuit which Chief Justice Bushe went, which was the summer circuit of last year, there had been no evidence of his abilities having so far declined as to prevent the due performance of his duties. Then it was, that he himself had become aware, that his health was declining, and then it was, that he intimated to his friends and acquaintances—but without reference to what the political character of the Government was or might be, that in the following term, he would take his seat in the Queen's Bench, for the last time. He was fully convinced, and since he saw the notice of the noble Lord on the paper, he had availed himself of every opportunity of making inquiry on the subject—he was fully convinced, that under any circumstances, Chief Justice Bushe would have sent in his resignation previous to the last term of last year. He was surprised, therefore, at the boldness of the noble Lord in bringing forward a charge of such a nature as his motion implied. He would not retaliate, by referring to the case of Lord Plunket and Lord Campbell; but this he must say, that if public opinion in Ireland was at all indicative of the truth, it would appear that terms had been offered by the late Government to this very individual, Chief Justice Bushe, to induce him to resign. He moreover believed, and he had good reason for believing, that an overture of a similar nature had been made to Judge Johnstone, amounting to offers of appointments for two of his sons. And without meaning to cast any reflection upon the Government of the noble Lord, who had provoked every censure which had fallen from his side of the House on this subject, he must be permitted to say that there never before, under any Administration, had been so great a clearance of the public offices in Ireland as that which had been effected by the late Government during the time they were dragging on a political existence. The police, the stipendiary magistracy, in fact every department of the public service, bore evidence of the exercise of Whig Government patronage to an extent which, he believed, was unparalleled within the memory of any living individual. Under these circumstances he was surprised at the motion of the noble Lord, and he would leave it to the House to say whether he was likely to gain anything by having brought it forward.

Mr. *O'Connell*, in explanation, said he did not allude to the last summer circuit, but to the March circuit, and the circuit before that.

Mr. *Wakley* observed that this motion had certainly given rise to a most edifying discussion. It only proved that when certain people, at certain times, and in certain places, fell out and disagreed, then it happened that it allowed others to know what was going on behind the curtain, and to learn something of the motives that actuated political parties. He must own that he was exceedingly puzzled to know what could be the motives of the noble Lord in bringing forward this motion. It was his habit to mark the notices of motion in which he did not take any particular interest, with certain annotations; for instance, some he noted as "fudge," others as "nonsense;" and it was curious that he should have marked the notice of the noble Lord "suicide." Having so marked it, he thought it might have called for his official interference. The noble Lord had brought forward this notice for the purpose of its working as a caution to judges against a repetition of that conduct which he attributed to the judges in question. He himself knew nothing further of the circumstances of these cases than what had been stated to the House that night. He did think that however blameable these parties might have been, yet there were other parties who, for a long series of years, had been guilty of worse conduct in their appointments, with reference to the bench, than the judge in question, even admitting all the allegations made against them to be true. Was it right, he asked, that the judgment seat should be made a political institution? Was it not scandalous to the character of the Legislature—was it not disgraceful to the intelligence of the nation—was it not a reflection upon he good sense of the country, that the appointments to the judgment seat should be determined by the political character of the parties to be placed upon it? He made no complaint of the last appointments that had occurred in this country—he made no complaint against the existing Administration—they had the example of other Administrations before them. They saw, however, that a change in the Administration led to changes in the highest court in the kingdom. In consequence of the late changes in the Administration there was one judge—the Lord Chancellor—who was universally acknowledged to be an ornament to his profession, who was universally admitted to be a judge who had performed the duties of his office in the most exemplary manner, and yet he was under the necessity of leaving that judgment-seat, to the great detriment of the public service, to make way for a political successor? The practice in this respect was that of former Administrations. But then he said, let not this discussion end without a useful lesson being drawn from it. He trusted that the present Administration, and that the right hon. Baronet who was at the head of the present Administration, would not in future, in the disposal of judicial situations, permit himself to be influenced by political views. Let legal qualifications alone entitle a person to ascend the judgment-seat, so that his decisions, when there, might not be tainted by politics.

Sir *Robert Peel* considered that the warning given by the hon. Gentleman was not one of which the Government stood in need. He was prepared to defend every appointment that had been made; and he did not think that her Majesty's Government was open to the imputation cast by the hon. Gentleman upon it. The name of Lord Corehouse introduced into this discussion reminded him that the appointment was made by himself. Mr. Cranstoun had been placed upon the judge's bench by him. Mr. Cranstoun had been at the time among the most eminent ornaments of the bar, and that gentleman was selected by him for the judicial bench, solely on account of his professional distinction. He had passed over and disregarded the political claims of men who followed that line of politics to which he himself adhered; and unhesitatingly he sought to avail himself of, and to secure to the public, the valuable services of Mr. Cranstoun. He was equally prepared to defend the appointments to judicial offices that had been made since he came into office. There was the appointment of Mr. Cresswell. No objection, he thought, could be made to that. He thought, and he was sure justly, that none had higher professional claims, and that, too, without any reference to his political connections. That was his opinion, and he found it ratified by the public voice. The present Government had also the disposal of two other appointments in the courts of equity in this country. These two appointments took place under an Act of Parliament of last Session, passed under circumstances that the House would probably bear in mind. There were two judicial offices that were regarded as great prizes—as great distinctions in the profession. The Government was as sensible as the right hon. Gentleman could be of the high judicial and professional services of the late Lord Chancellor. As a judge he was always to be spoken of with the highest respect. And one of the first acts of the Government was to tender one of these situations to Lord Cottenham. The office was tendered to Lord Cottenham. He could quite understand and appreciate the motives from which it was declined. He might, indeed, fairly own, that they could scarcely have expected, according to the ordinary usages of the profession, that Lord Cottenham would have undertaken the duties of the office; but, at the same time, they did not forego the opportunity, if Lord Cottenham would have waived that regard to usage, to show that they attached great value to the continuance of his judicial labours. If their offer had been accepted, it would have made a saving in the public expenditure, and it would have secured to the public the great professional knowledge of that learned Lord. He now asked the hon. Gentleman whether the present Government was properly open to that reproach which he said was applicable to all Governments? He would next proceed to give an explanation as to all he knew of the retirement of the two Gentlemen whose names had been mentioned The noble Lord had acquitted the Government of all blame in those transactions. The noble Lord's motion, then, was directed against the judges themselves. When, then, he heard the bar in each country express unanimously, in their addresses to their judges, the hope that, in retiring into private life, they might enjoy repose and unmitigated happiness for the remainder of their days, it was painful to think that that repose was to be interfered with, and that happiness poisoned, by a debate in the House of Commons which conveyed reflections upon them. He was not himself at all prepared to expect the resignation of his valued friend—Lord Chief Justice Bushe. He had not heard before that his powers were so weakened as to render his continuance in office painful to him; but when it was intimated to him that the Chief Justice's age was seventy-two years—that he had been in the public service for so many years—having filled the office of Solicitor-general from 1805 to 1822, and since then on the bench—he thought that that eminent individual having served under an administration which was of the political party to which the noble Lord belonged, he thought that mere circumstance ought to have had some weight with the noble Lord; he thought that the noble Lord might have recollected the lustre that had been shed upon the Irish administration by the united abilities of a Plunket and a Bushe, and these circumstances would, at least, have constituted a reason why the latter should have been exempted from such a proceeding as this. When the Lord Chief Justice expressed a desire to retire, and added that he was seventy-two years old, and had given twenty years' service on the bench, he conceived the request a rational one, and that it might well be complied with, with every consideration for the public economy and the public service. But that was all the transaction. There was no stipulation of any kind. There was no encouragement to him to retire. On the contrary, recollecting the Chief Justice's services and his abilities, he could not but think with the deepest regret that he should not continue on the bench. So far from wishing the Chief Justice to retire, or to benefit by his retirement, it was his desire to secure to the public his services for a longer period. As to an intimation to him not to continue in office, it was one that Chief Justice Bushe would, if made to him, from the dignity and purity of his mind, have repelled with disgust. The age of the Chief Justice was seventy-two years. He had been twenty years on the bench. Could he, then, read that cordial and affectionate address presented to him by the whole bar of Ireland—for it was agreed to at a publicly convened meeting of the profession; could he, then, think that he, who said he was the advocate of "justice to Ireland," should be the first man to throw imputations upon that profession to which he belonged—that he should describe that profession (the bar of Ireland) as one whose address to a retiring judge was to be regarded as mere waste paper—as that, in which some had the meanness to flatter, and others not the courage to dissent. With respect, also, to the retirement of the Lord President, he was equally ready to enter into an explanation as to all the circumstances connected with it. The appointment of the son was not in the slightest degree inconsistent with the retirement of the father. The son was appointed solely through the application of that rule which the hon. Gentleman contended should be applied rigidly, and according to which he was raised by the bar of Scotland to their most honourable office—the Dean of Faculty. He believed that the bar of Scotland admitted that no more distinguished advocate could be raised to the bench than was Mr. Hope. The hon. Gentleman, however, asked, as a charge against his side, "Did not the Lord President signify a wish to retire in 1834?" He declared to the hon. Gentleman—singular as it might seem—that he had not the slightest recollection of any such proposal. At the same time he did not deny that it might have been made. But as to his premeditatedly refusing to accept it, he could assure the hon. Gentleman that he had not the slightest recollection of any such proposal having been made. But suppose it had been made, how utterly inconsistent was the conduct imputed to him on that occasion with the motives which it was alleged influenced him in this case. It was clear that his tenure of office in 1835 was very precarious. After the vote on the Speakership, it was pretty evident what his fate would be. It was not too much to expect that the hon. Gentleman's foresight in 1840 was not less distinct. His confidence in the duration of his administration must then have been somewhat shaken—the brilliancy of the official prospect must then have been somewhat clouded, and he should have thought that the previous transactions of 1839, and the retirement of the Government, because it did not "possess the public confidence," furnished some bitter forebodings. Yet the hon. Gentleman now charged him with not receiving the proposal of the Lord President to retire in 1835. So that the hon. Gentleman's accusation amounts to this, "You had a plausible ground for accepting the retirement of a judge during your administration, which you must have known would be short-lived, but you had the virtue to resist his retirement." If the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Wakley) thought that this was the sum of the charge against his Administration, he ought to take his place again on his side of the House. He asked the hon. Gentleman to whose advantage was it that these disclosures had been made? If the hon. Gentleman's conscience was satisfied that the history of these appointments redounded altogether to the credit of his (the Ministerial) side of the House, and not to that of their opponents, he surely must come back to his old position. But supposing he had given the opinion which had been imputed to him, and had said to the Lord President, "You mistake your strength—your infirmities are not what you suppose; your reputation is high, and there is still an interval which you may apply to the public service. My advice to you, as a friend, is not to retire." There was nothing inconsistent in this with the present conduct of his Administration; and if in 1839 he was called upon to reflect upon the advice he had given to the Lord President in 1835 to remain in office, and to devote some portion of his remaining years to the public service, he should have been reconciled to the decision at which he had arrived by hearing the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Fox Maule) then Under-Secretary of State, burning with official zeal, declare that he was "astonished to hear the statement made with regard to a judge of the Court of Session." [Sir *James Graham*: Can that be Fox Maule?] That was the name prefixed to these observations. The hon. Gentleman went on to say, "that he had heard for the first time of a distinguished and eminent judge being afflicted with mental incapacity. That his physical powers might be somewhat impaired he could believe, but that his mental faculties were inadequate to the discharge of his duties he was prepared to deny." Did they (the Opposition) not account then for this venerable judge's tenacity of office? When, in 1839, the Under-Secretary of State undertook to answer for all his mental faculties; when he, a Scotchman, conversant with all that occurred in that country — perfectly familiar with all that passed in what he called their "narrow circles"—might not this judge fairly reason in the following way. — "It is true I ought to retire, but such is my gratitude to my fellow-countryman, who has borne testimony to my continued powers, that I shall remain at my post, lest by acting otherwise I should myself be the first to question my competency." And what, after all, was the charge of incapacity which, it appeared, the Minister overlooked? Why, that this able judge used some expression betraying a want of temper in pronouncing his opinion on one of the most important questions ever decided in the courts of Scotland. If removal was to take place on such grounds, the Crown could take no course so fatal to the independence of the judicial character. If every question of retirement were submitted to such an ordeal as was attempted to be thus set up the exalted character of the judges would be materially impaired. He left the whole question to the deliberate voice and judgment of the public. The hon. Member for Finsbury stated that when he came to the notice of the noble Lord, he marked the word "suicide" against it. Notwithstanding all the horror which the crime of suicide was calculated to inspire, there were sometimes circumstances connected with it, such as those in the case of Curtius, which in some measure entitled it to sympathy, when it was committed with a view to promote great public interests. To that species of sympathy, and to all the praise which such conduct was calculated to excite, the noble Lord who brought forward the present motion was entitled. The noble Lord, in his zealous and anxious desire to support the constitutional appointment of the judges, having failed to establish a case against others, with an heroic devotion seldom paralleled, sacrificed himself by the exposure which he made of the practices of his own party.

Lord *J. Russell* rose to reply. He said, the question which he had put was a simple one, yet, simple as it was, only one person had made any reply to it during the debate. The right hon. Baronet, the First Lord of the Treasury, instead of meeting the question, had adverted to other cases, and stated that he could retort cases upon the other side which were liable to great reproach, but as to anything like a defence of the charge which had been made, none had been attempted, except by one right hon. Gentleman on the opposite side. The statement which he (Lord J. Russell) had made was, that two judges, high upon the bench, who were unfit from infirmity, whether mental or bodily, to continue to hold their offices, yet that they, notwithstanding, still continued to hold them to accommodate the party in the State which was expecting to come into power. The second part of his statement was, that if such were the case, and if those who held judicial appointments continued to retain them for political purposes, looking to the majorities and minorities of that House, with calculations of one, one night, and two another night, holding themselves ready to resign as the occasion might occur, such a course was highly unbecoming, and if persisted in was calculated very much to lower the judicial character in the eyes of the public. As to the first instance, he (Lord J. Russell) had only urged that there was strong ground of suspicion; but much had since been said on that (the Ministerial) side of the House which tended to corroborate and give strength to these suspicions. It was stated that the Lord President found some difficulty in ascending the steps of the Court of Session; that he was in the 79th year of his age; and that he was afflicted with deafness. Were these afflictions sudden visitations? Did they not require a considerable time to be contracted? If so, was it not natural to conclude that the delay which took place with respect to the resignation was caused with a view to the suspected change in the Administration; As to the case of the Lord Chief Justice, all that had been uttered in the course of the debate tended to confirm the suspicions which the period of his resignation was calculated to excite. According to the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Recorder of Dublin, it was only last summer that the Lord Chief Justice began to be conscious of his infirmities. If the right hon. Gentleman made that statement from a personal knowledge of the fact, it would, of course, remove the suspicion which the resignation had created, and the course pursued by the Lord Chief Justice must be pronounced to be a proper one. The statement of the right hon. Gentleman did not, however, agree with the other statements which had been made in this respect, nor did the statement made by the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department, appear at all conclusive. Did the present Government mean to assent to the doctrine that it did not misbecome the high and exalted character of a judge of the land to watch the oscillation of political parties in the State, and to resign in favour of one of those parties with a view to supporting it? For his own part he was satisfied that some of the parties appointed to judicial offices by Lords Melbourne and Cottenham would think it otherwise than highly unbecoming to speculate in Ministerial changes dependent upon the majorities of that House. It appeared strongly suspicious that such was not the case in the instances under discussion; and, acting upon the impression, he would persevere in his motion, and endeavour, if possible, to ascertain whether or not these singular coincidences of resignation and change of Ministry occurred, as was alleged, in the common course of events. With respect to the case of Lord Corehouse, as far as he was connected with it, the fact was this:—When the resignation was tendered it was not done absolutely and unconditionally; and the Under Secretary of State was directed to inform his Lordship that the resignation could not be so accepted, and that no promise could be given; that if he was desirous of resigning he might do so, and if he was willing to stay he might stay. As to what had been said of Lord Plunket, the appointment was one totally different. Would any one say, that the office of Lord Chancellor was similar to that of a judge? He would not then enter into the reasons. The fault in the case of Lord Plunket, if there was any, was that he remained too long. Then with respect to the gentleman who succeeded Lord Plunket, it would be admitted that he was a man who held a very high standing in his profession, one eminently versed in a knowledge of the law, and also well acquainted with the political and legal information necessary to give him a high character in that House. Such a man it was who succeeded Lord Plunket at a period when it was very difficult, and a matter of much uncertainty, to surmise what party would be the gainers by the projected dissolution. What were the terms upon which Lord Campbell accepted the Chancellorship of Ireland? The condition was that he would accept it, but without the usual retiring pension; yet such was the man whom the Secretary of State for the Home Department had been so ready to attack. Had Lord Campbell any precedent for the course which he adopted on that occasion? In 1834, Sir Edward Sugden was apppointed to the same office when the Administration was less likely to be permanent, the Government never having had a majority on any question. Sir Edward Sugden held the appointment for four or five—no, for three months. Had he on that occasion made the same condition with respect to it that had been made by Lord Campbell? He had made no charge against the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth, because of the appointment of Sir Edward Sugden to the Lord Chancellorship, nor were appointments to that office mixed up with the question then before the House. If the hon. Member for Finsbury, could bring himself to believe that there was nothing to suspect in the coincidence of the resignation, why, then, he would be warranted in accepting the right hon. Baronet's invitation, and going over to the other side of the House. The case was before them. The House would deal with it as it pleased; but for his own part he found it difficult to come to the conclusion that the judges had not delayed their resignations for the purpose of favouring a particular party after they had been unfitted for discharging the duties of their office.

The House divided:—Ayes 75; Noes 148; Majority 73.

distinctly specified. He should not have the slightest objection to the production of the consular returns when they arrived, for the purpose of showing the effects of the treaty in different parts of Turkey.

Dr. *Bowring*, after the production of those papers, would call the attention of the House to the effects of these duties in Turkey.

EXCHEQUER BILL FRAUD.] Lord *John Russell* begged to inquire of the right hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what course he proposed to take with reference to the motion of which he had given notice, upon the subject of the Exchequer Bill fraud. That notice at present stood for Tuesday. Was it intended that the appointment should be persevered in, to the exclusion of the debate upon the Corn-laws, which, no doubt, would extend over that evening; or would the right hon. Gentleman give way, and bring on his motion on a subsequent evening?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that he was entirely in the hands of the House. He was perfectly ready to proceed with the motion on Tuesday; but if it was thought preferable that the debate on the Corn-laws should take precedence of it on that day, he would postpone it until Thursday.

Mr. *F. T. Baring* said, that great anxiety prevailed in the public mind upon the character and result of this motion, and he thought that it was highly desirable that some intimation of what was proposed to be done by the right hon. Gentleman should be given. At present, the notice of the right hon. Gentleman was merely that he should call the attention of the House to the subject.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that there were several reasons which induced him to think that the better course would be, to introduce the whole subject to the House at once, rather than make any statement before hand, which might create excitement in the public mind. He might at once give notice that he would bring forward his motion on Thursday instead of on Tuesday.

POOR-LAW AMENDMENT ACT.] Mr. *Ferrand* begged to make an inquiry of the right hon. Baronet, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with regard to the Poor-law Amendment Act. The right hon. Baronet had, on a former evening, stated that it was the intention of her Majesty's Government to bring forward a measure for the continuance of that act, and of the powers of the commissioners, but that that measure would not be introduced until after Easter. In March the election of guardians took place, and by the existing act it was enacted, that the votes of the rate-payers should be taken, and returned as the Poor-law commissioners should direct and order. Officers had been hitherto appointed who had been paid, and it was believed that through some of the northern districts of England there had been foul play, guardians being returned who were favourable to the new Poor-law, while those opposed to it, but to whom the electors had, in truth, given a majority, were declared to be not elected. He had to ask the right hon. Baronet to use his influence in Somerset-house, and he hoped it was considerable, to induce the Poor-law commissioners to issue an order, that during the ensuing election, no paid officer should interfere with the voting.

Sir *James Graham* was somewhat at a loss to understand the import of the question of his hon. Friend, the Member for Knaresborough, for it partook more of the character of advice than inquiry; but he would state, that with respect to the approaching elections of guardians, he conceived, that it would be exceedingly inconvenient, at the present time, to make any alteration in the arrangements for electing them. The Poor-law commissioners, by an order directed to most of the unions, recommended, that the clerks should be the returning officers at these elections, and the reasons for that recommendation were stated in the circular of the Poor-law commissioners, and fully justified the adoption of the course which the commissioners proposed. They were aware of the importance of their acquaintance with the forms of election, their necessary knowledge of the local interests of the officers, and the impossibility of their becoming candidates for the office of guardian. If the hon. Gentleman wished to know what his (Sir James Graham's) opinion was upon the subject, he would confess, that he could not take the hon.

Gentleman's advice, because those reasons to which he had referred were, in his mind, satisfactory, as showing the propriety of the steps which had been already taken, and for the appointment of the clerks to the unions as the returning officers. If his hon. Friend, however, wished to bring forward any case against any of the returning officers, who were clerks, and might be punished by the commissioners for misconduct, he could assure him, on the part of the commissioners, that for past or future delinquencies, any such persons should be visited with condign punishment, and every facility should be given to bring such cases to a satisfactory conclusion.

GRAND JURY LAWS IN IRELAND.] Mr. *W. S. O'Brien* begged to ask the noble Lord, the Secretary for Ireland, whether there were any intention on the part of her Majesty's Government, to bring forward any measure with reference to the Grand Jury Laws in Ireland.

Lord *Eliot* would have been glad if the hon. Member had given him notice of his intention to put this question to him, as he could not but think, that upon all such subjects of inquiry it was highly desirable that notice should be given. A commission, the hon. Member was aware, had been sitting upon the subject of the Grand Jury Laws in Ireland, and he believed that they had agreed upon their report, though it was not yet drawn up, or placed in his hands. He did not imagine that there would be any difficulty in laying it on the Table of the House when it was completed; but any measure to be proposed by the Government must in a great degree depend on the recommendations to be made in the report.

Mr. *Young*, a member of the Commission said, that the greater portion of the recommendations to be made by the commissioners had been agreed upon, but all the final details had not yet been adopted. He thought, that the report might be laid before the House at the end of about a fortnight.

MORTALITY—NORTH DUBLIN WORKHOUSE.] Mr. *Shaw* begged to ask a question of the right hon. Baronet, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with regard to the mode in which the Poor-law had been carried out in Ireland. Considerable excitement had been produced in Dublin by an unusual mortality among infant children in the workhouse of the North Dublin Union. He requested to be informed whether the right hon. Baronet had directed any inquiry to be made into the circumstances attending this melancholy occurrence, and whether he had any objection to lay the report elicited by any such inquiry, before the House.

Sir *James Graham* said, that the moment he had seen the accounts of the great mortality in the union workhouse referred to by the right hon. Gentleman, he had directed an immediate inquiry to be instituted. In consequence of that inquiry a special report had been made, to the production of which he had not the least objection.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS.] Mr. *Roebuck* begged to ask the hon. and learned Attorney-general, when he thought it likely that the bill, of his intention to introduce which he had given notice, relative to the amendment of the Municipal Corporations Act, would be printed? Great anxiety existed in reference to this subject, which he thought it would be desirable to calm.

The *Attorney-General* said, that he proposed to bring in the bill on Monday next. He begged to be allowed to state, that there was some difficulty in reference to the terms of its provisions, as to the protection to be given to proceedings already in progress. He had received various communications from different parts of the kingdom upon the subject, to which, and to the suggestions contained therein, he was anxious to give his consideration.

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.] Mr. *Hawes* begged to inquire of the right hon. Baronet, the Secretary for the Home Department, whether there was any intention, on the part of the Government, to bring forward in the course of the present Session any measure upon the subject of the medical profession?

Sir *James Graham* said, if the hon. Gentleman meant to ask him whether he would pledge himself to lay a bill on the Table of the House during the present Session, his reply was, that he could give no such pledge. On the other hand, he begged to state, that considering the question of great importance, he had directed his attention to it during the recess, and distinctly specified. He should not have the slightest objection to the production of the consular returns when they arrived, for the purpose of showing the effects of the treaty in different parts of Turkey.

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POOR-LAW AMENDMENT ACT.] Mr. *Ferrand* begged to make an inquiry of the right hon. Baronet, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with regard to the Poor-law Amendment Act. The right hon. Baronet had, on a former evening, stated that it was the intention of her Majesty's Government to bring forward a measure for the continuance of that act, and of the powers of the commissioners, but that that measure would not be introduced until after Easter. In March the election of guardians took place, and by the existing act it was enacted, that the votes of the rate-payers should be taken, and returned as the Poor-law commissioners should direct and order. Officers had been hitherto appointed who had been paid, and it was believed that through some of the northern districts of England there had been foul play, guardians being returned who were favourable to the new Poor-law, while those opposed to it, but to whom the electors had, in truth, given a majority, were declared to be not elected. He had to ask the right hon. Baronet to use his influence in Somerset-house, and he hoped it was considerable, to induce the Poor-law commissioners to issue an order, that during the ensuing election, no paid officer should interfere with the voting.

Sir *James Graham* was somewhat at a loss to understand the import of the question of his hon. Friend, the Member for Knaresborough, for it partook more of the character of advice than inquiry; but he would state, that with respect to the approaching elections of guardians, he conceived, that it would be exceedingly inconvenient, at the present time, to make any alteration in the arrangements for electing them. The Poor-law commissioners, by an order directed to most of the unions, recommended, that the clerks should be the returning officers at these elections, and the reasons for that recommendation were stated in the circular of the Poor-law commissioners, and fully justified the adoption of the course which the commissioners proposed. They were aware of the importance of their acquaintance with the forms of election, their necessary knowledge of the local interests of the officers, and the impossibility of their becoming candidates for the office of guardian. If the hon. Gentleman wished to know what his (Sir James Graham's) opinion was upon the subject, he would confess, that he could not take the hon.

Gentleman's advice, because those reasons to which he had referred were, in his mind, satisfactory, as showing the propriety of the steps which had been already taken, and for the appointment of the clerks to the unions as the returning officers. If his hon. Friend, however, wished to bring forward any case against any of the returning officers, who were clerks, and might be punished by the commissioners for misconduct, he could assure him, on the part of the commissioners, that for past or future delinquencies, any such persons should be visited with condign punishment, and every facility should be given to bring such cases to a satisfactory conclusion.

GRAND JURY LAWS IN IRELAND.] Mr. *W. S. O'Brien* begged to ask the noble Lord, the Secretary for Ireland, whether there were any intention on the part of her Majesty's Government, to bring forward any measure with reference to the Grand Jury Laws in Ireland.

Lord *Eliot* would have been glad if the hon. Member had given him notice of his intention to put this question to him, as he could not but think, that upon all such subjects of inquiry it was highly desirable that notice should be given. A commission, the hon. Member was aware, had been sitting upon the subject of the Grand Jury Laws in Ireland, and he believed that they had agreed upon their report, though it was not yet drawn up, or placed in his hands. He did not imagine that there would be any difficulty in laying it on the Table of the House when it was completed; but any measure to be proposed by the Government must in a great degree depend on the recommendations to be made in the report.

Mr. *Young*, a member of the Commission said, that the greater portion of the recommendations to be made by the commissioners had been agreed upon, but all the final details had not yet been adopted. He thought, that the report might be laid before the House at the end of about a fortnight.

MORTALITY—NORTH DUBLIN WORKHOUSE.] Mr. *Shaw* begged to ask a question of the right hon. Baronet, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with regard to the mode in which the Poor-law had been carried out in Ireland. Considerable excitement had been produced in Dublin by an unusual mortality among infant children in the workhouse of the North Dublin Union. He requested to be informed whether the right hon. Baronet had directed any inquiry to be made into the circumstances attending this melancholy occurrence, and whether he had any objection to lay the report elicited by any such inquiry, before the House.

Sir *James Graham* said, that the moment he had seen the accounts of the great mortality in the union workhouse referred to by the right hon. Gentleman, he had directed an immediate inquiry to be instituted. In consequence of that inquiry a special report had been made, to the production of which he had not the least objection.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS.] Mr. *Roebuck* begged to ask the hon. and learned Attorney-general, when he thought it likely that the bill, of his intention to introduce which he had given notice, relative to the amendment of the Municipal Corporations Act, would be printed? Great anxiety existed in reference to this subject, which he thought it would be desirable to calm.

The *Attorney-General* said, that he proposed to bring in the bill on Monday next. He begged to be allowed to state, that there was some difficulty in reference to the terms of its provisions, as to the protection to be given to proceedings already in progress. He had received various communications from different parts of the kingdom upon the subject, to which, and to the suggestions contained therein, he was anxious to give his consideration.

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.] Mr. *Hawes* begged to inquire of the right hon. Baronet, the Secretary for the Home Department, whether there was any intention, on the part of the Government, to bring forward in the course of the present Session any measure upon the subject of the medical profession?

Sir *James Graham* said, if the hon. Gentleman meant to ask him whether he would pledge himself to lay a bill on the Table of the House during the present Session, his reply was, that he could give no such pledge. On the other hand, he begged to state, that considering the question of great importance, he had directed his attention to it during the recess, and was endeavouring to frame a measure upon the subject. He did not despair yet of laying it on the Table of the House.

SYRIA.] Sir *Charles Napier* rose, in pursuance of notice, to ask the right hon. Baronet, whether he had any objection to lay before the House a copy of the instructions given by Sir Robert Stopford to General Mitchell, General Jochmus, and Captain Stewart, after the submission of Mehemet Ali; also the instructions given by Lord Ponsonby to General Jochmus and Mr. Wood; likewise, if any correspondence had taken place between the British and Turkish governments, relative to the amelioration of the inhabitants of Lebanon, as was promised by the Allied Powers? The hon. and gallant officer said, he had been induced to ask the last question in consequence of his having received from very high authority a statement that the condition of the inhabitants of Lebanon was one of increased distress, and that they were now worse off than when we had first landed there. Quarrels had arisen, too, it appeared, between certain classes, and a great loss of life had taken place; but although the Turkish government had been applied to, the Pacha had refused to send any assistance.

Sir *Robert Peel* would answer the questions of the hon. and gallant Gentleman in the order in which they stood in the notice of motion which he had given. First, he asked whether there was any objection to lay before the House a copy of the instructions given by Sir Robert Stopford to General Mitchell, General Jochmus, and Captain Stewart, after the submission of Mehemet Ali. In answer to this question, he had to state that he had been unable to find in the public departments to which he had access any record of these papers. Search had been made in the Admiralty and Foreign-office, but no trace could be found of such instructions. Reference was indeed found to be made to such instructions, but they themselves were not forthcoming. The second question was, whether there was any objection to produce the instructions given by Lord Ponsonby to General Jochmus and Mr. Wood? His answer to this must be similar to what which he had given to the first question of the hon. and gallant Gentleman, that the instructions could not be found, and he was unable, therefore, to state whether there was any objection to their production or not. Thirdly, as to whether any correspondence had taken place between the British and Turkish governments relative to the amelioration of the inhabitants of Lebanon, as was promised by the Allied Powers? He had to state that frequent correspondence had taken place, and the Porte had been urged in the strongest manner to comply with the assurance which had been given. Since Sir Stratford Canning had left this country as ambassador to the Ottoman court, instruction had been given him to urge upon the Porte the necessity of complying with its assurances of making every effort to prevent disorder in Syria, and ameliorate the condition of its subjects in Lebanon. He did not think it would promote the object the hon. and gallant Gentleman had in view, if the correspondence applied for were produced, and he should therefore be permitted to exercise his discretion in withholding it. However, he would state, that application had been made to the Porte to fulfil the engagements it had entered into, both by the present and the late Government, in the most urgent manner. He might take this opportunity of referring to an erroneous impression which commonly existed, that this country had declared itself the special protector of some portion of the population of Syria. The Druses supposed themselves to have a particular claim upon Great Britain. What we had to do was to procure the amelioration of all the subjects of the Porte in Syria generally, without reference to religious principles. He would assure the hon. and gallant Gentleman, that every effort on the part of the present Government would be made to cause the Porte to fulfil its engagements with respect to the amelioration of the condition of its subjects, but at present he could not accede to the motion of the hon. and gallant Gentleman.

Sir *C. Napier* said that it was very much to be lamented that the despatches to which he had alluded were not to be found, because it would appear, from statements which had been published in the *Malta Correspondent*, that after Admiral Stopford had, in the most humane manner, as it was believed in accordance with the instructions which he had received from home, suffered Ibrahim Pacha to retreat without opposition, and had even assisted him in that retreat, General Jochmus, in obedience to instructions which he had received from Lord Ponsonby, proceeded to take measures for the destruction of his troops, and had boasted that he had destroyed between 20,000 and 30,000 human beings after Mehemet Ali had submitted, and after that submission had been accepted by the Porte.

Lord Ashburton.] Mr. *Mark Philips* said, that when he had yesterday given notice of his intention to move for a copy of the letter from Mr. Amory to Lord Palmerston, dated August 28, 1841, together with its accompanying papers, and of the correspondence which followed thereon between Lord Aberdeen, Lord Canning, Mr. Amory, and Mr. Kinder, he was not aware of the absence of the noble Lord to whom the motion referred; and as he was the last person who would wish to take any unfair advantage, it appeared to him that it would be better, and more consistent with propriety, if he did not now press for the production of those papers. He hoped the House would allow him to state, in justification of his conduct, the reason which had induced him to bring forward the motion. He had seen in the "Circular to Bankers" (a paper most widely circulated) certain statements calculated, as he thought, to prejudice Mr. Kinder. That gentleman was a friend of his late colleague, and, in company with his colleague, he had last year waited on the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, to lay a statement of the case before him, because he thought that Mr. Kinder had received treatment in Mexico of which he had a right to complain. As he conceived this gentleman to be suffering under the loss of property, and as statements calculated to injure him in the public estimation were made, he had thought it right to call for the production of these papers. He would now withdraw his motion, and he begged to assure the friends of the noble Lord, that he would not renew it without giving them ample notice of his intention.

Judicial Resignations — Scotland.] Mr. *Fox Maule* moved

"That an humble address be presented to her Majesty, that she will be graciously pleased to give directions that there be laid before this House, a return of the number of jury cases in the first division of the Court of Session, from the 1st day of January 1839, till the 31st day of July 1841; specifying those in which the late Lord President of the Court of Session presided, and those in which any other and what judge presided."

With reference to the debate of last night, he begged to say that, if he had fallen into any error in the statements which he had made with respect to the learned individual above alluded to, he was most ready to offer every compensation in his power. These returns, however, to which he hoped there would be no objection, would put the public in possession of the real merits of the case, and of the truth or falsehood of his assertions.

Sir *James Graham* said, that it was not his wish to revive the debate of last night, but he understood this motion to have been induced by a difference on a matter of fact, which had arisen between the right hon. Gentleman who had sat down, and the learned Lord Advocate (Sir W. Rae), and for the purpose of showing whether the right hon. Gentleman had, through misapprehension, made an erroneous statement upon a subject upon which, undoubtedly, he had expressed a very strong belief. No one who knew the right hon. Gentleman, he was persuaded, could suppose, that he would make a statement which he did not believe to be true, but he must say, on that side of the House, that it was impossible to accede to the motion which had now been made. The motion of the noble Lord (Lord John Russell), it appeared to him, had implied an attack upon the learned Lord President of the Court of Session; but this appeared to him to import even a more direct attack. As he had said before, it was not his wish to revive the discussion of the subject. On the motion of the noble Lord, the House had expressed its opinion most unequivocally, and he had no doubt, that if the right hon. Gentleman pressed the present motion to a division, the House would confirm their decision of the previous night, for he should feel it to be his duty to oppose the motion, even if the House were called on to divide.

Mr. *Fox Maule* said, that after the refusal of the right hon. Baronet to produce the return for which he had moved, he should decline to press the question to a division; but at the same time he must take the opportunity of saying, that his purpose had been equally answered, so far as he was concerned, whether his motion was acceded to or not, because it appeared to him, that the refusal of the right hon. Baronet was a ready admission, that he was not wrong in the statement which he had made. Although he was not desirous of renewing the discussion, he must say, that the right hon. Baronet had not taken the course which he considered the most prudent for his own purpose. He did not think, that the returns would at all affect the character of any person, but they would merely state what was the fact, upon which a difference existed—a matter of fact upon which he conceived the public had a right to be informed.

Mr. *Wakley* regretted, that the right hon. Gentleman should be content to withdraw his motion.

Mr. *F. Maule:* I do not withdraw it; I only said I would not press it to a division.

Mr. *Wakley* said, at all events, he could not but express his astonishment and deep regret, that a motion of this kind should be opposed by the Government. The adoption of such a course by the dominant faction, in his mind, foretold the most awful danger to the institutions of this country. The party opposite were a most powerful party, and maintained a large array in that House: they were supported by the aristocracy of England; the people of England paid the judges, and was it to be understood, that the party now in power threw a shield over the judges, and would not allow their conduct to be investigated by that House? In the present case an allegation of the most serious character had been made as to the conduct of a judge in the discharge of his duties. It was said also, that he had held office for a political purpose, while in a state of mind which rendered him incapable of discharging the duties imposed upon him, and which the community were entitled to demand of him. On the other side, the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate declared those statements to be wholly and entirely unfounded. This was a question in which the issue was not only between the parties in that House, but between one of those parties and the people of England. He insisted on the right of the people of England to know the truth or falsehood of this allegation; and he declared, that he was at a loss to understand the principle of the policy of the Government which had induced them not to accede to this motion. What was the return moved for? It was a return of the number of jury cases in the first division of the Court of Session, from the 1st of January, 1839, to the 31st of July, 1841; specifying those in which the late Lord President of the Court of Session presided, and those in which any other and what judge presided. Was there anything unfair in that motion? or could there have been any motion of a more candid or of a more honest nature? It related simply to a matter of fact, and not to a matter of inference; and was that House to be told, that the executive Government refused to comply with such a motion? What might the judges infer from such a course? That it was no consequence how much they might neglect their duties—that they might attend or not to the execution of those functions which were properly demandable of them, and that, of whatever neglect they might be guilty—there was no fear of investigation or reprehension from that House. The right hon. Gentleman near him (Mr. Fox Maule) had said, that his duties had been neglected by the judge, and performed by others. The hon. and learned Lord Advocate had contended, that that judge had not been absent on one occasion. He reiterated that statement, and he made that allegation upon his honour, as a gentleman and as a Member of Parliament. If under these circumstances the Government refused to comply with the terms of the motion, only one impression could exist in the public mind, and that would be, of the entire truth of what had fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Perth. He did hope and trust, that the right hon. Baronet would see the propriety of altering his decision, and would see at once, that there could be no objection to the terms of the motion being complied with.

Mr. *Roebuck* having, in reality no feeling upon this matter, either as regarded one party or the other, would beg to suggest to the right hon. Baronet the peculiar position in which that House stood with reference to the administration of justice. The judges could not be removed by the Crown, but on an Address of the two Houses of Parliament, who were therefore the supervisors of their conduct, and of their mode of discharging their functions. It should be a matter of course that this motion should be complied with. He put it as a constitutional point of law, that when one of the functionaries of the land did not properly discharge his duty, or was supposed not to discharge his duty properly, it was a matter of course that the House should have all requisite information upon the subject. Cæsar's wife was above suspicion; the judges should also be above suspicion. But he asked the right hon. Baronet whether it were possible, that under the existing circumstances the learned judge, whose character had been attacked, could be above suspicion if the present motion was rejected.

Sir *Robert Peel* said, that the possibility or propriety of acceding to any particular motion could not be decided upon with reference to the mere form of that motion, but the object and the spirit of it must be taken into consideration. The ground on which he had opposed the motion of the noble Lord last night was, not that in itself there could be any especial objection to its being granted, though there was a departure from the usual course in producing the terms in which a judge resigned, but in reference to which it might be observed that a judge, in making stipulations, need never commit them to paper, but might couch his official letter of resignation in the commonest and plainest terms; but the ground on which he had opposed that motion was, that he had thought that it conveyed a reflection, an unjust reflection, against two judges, whose conduct was perfectly above reproach, and free from suspicion. The right hon. Gentleman, who had brought forward the present motion, had made a statement which had been contradicted on that side of the House, and upon this point a difference of opinion prevailed.

Mr. *Fox Maule* begged to explain. He had stated that during a certain time a retired judge had not sat, where he ought to have sat, in a particular court. The learned Lord Advocate had stated that this assertion was totally without foundation.

Sir *Robert Peel:* The right hon. Gentleman had brought forward a motion tonight which was implied in that of the noble Lord; but he felt that the course of the debate last night had been so completely against him, that he had now declined going to a division. In point of fact, the debate of last night had been entirely unfavourable to hon. Gentlemen opposite; but the right hon. Gentleman was so alarmed by the course which he had taken, that he was now doing all he could to resume the discussion which had been already once terminated. The motion now made was, in point of fact, tantamount to that which had been made last night; it was founded on the same principle, and he must say, that if the Government had consented to the production of these returns, after what had occurred last night, he believed that it would be thought that they acquiesced in the reflections attempted to be cast upon the late learned Lord President. The Lord President had retired from office, and no longer held any public situation; and though he agreed with the hon. and learned Member for Bath that that House did exercise, and ought to exercise, a control over the conduct of the judges, yet he was certain that if they chose on every occasion to call for returns with respect to any particular judge, and to execute the power which they no doubt possessed, the effect of it would be to prejudice the administration of justice. He took this motion in connexion with that of last night, and he must say that he thought an acquiescence in it would be implying a reflection on the judge, to which he felt satisfied that he was not open.

Mr. *O'Connell* would say one word only upon this subject. He thought that as the fact upon which a difference of opinion existed was one upon which authentic information could be given, it ought to be secured. Her Majesty's Government could authenticate the statement which had been advanced, and why did they not do it? Because they were afraid of the result. The practice of removing a judge from one court to make him chief of another court was objectionable, but it was still worse to make the appointment of judges anything like hereditary, and that a father should be succeeded by a son. [*No, no.*] He had understood this was the case. At any rate, as a judge was paid by the public, had it not a right to know whether he had earned his salary by his attendance in court? It was a great evil that the motion was to be set aside, not on its merits, but on some technical ground. All that he required was, that the facts of the case should be obtained and laid before the House. When excuses were made for non-attendance in court, it should be known whether this arose from habitual or accidental ill health.

Mr. *Hope Johnstone* was understood to say, that the impression on his mind was, that the statement of the right hon. Member for Perth was greatly exaggerated. His own belief was, that the President was prevented from attending in court from an accidental attack of illness which any man was liable to, and not from any continued infirmity. He confessed that he did not feel any objection to the production of the return, and should, therefore, not vote against it. He could not help expressing his regret that the right hon. Baronet should feel himself called upon by circumstances to resist the motion.

Sir *R. Peel* wished it to be distinctly understood that he did not resist the motion from any fear of the result.

Mr. *Hope Johnstone* did not imagine that the opposition of the right hon. Baronet to the motion arose from anything of a personal feeling, but from some matter of general policy.

The House divided—Ayes 113; Noes 139: Majority 26.

List of the AYES.

Armstrong, H. A.
Aldam, H. A.
Armstrong, Sir A.
Barclay, D.
Baring, rt. hon. F. T.
Barnard, E. G.
Bell, J.
Bernal, R.
Blake, Sir V.
Bowes, J.
Bowring, Dr.
Brodie, W. B.
Brotherton, J.
Browne, hon. W.
Bryan, G.
Buller, C.
Busfield, W.
Byng, rt. hon. G. S.
Childers, J. W.
Clay, Sir W.
Colborne, hn. W. N. R.
Cowper, hon. W. F.
Dalrymple, Capt.
Dawson, hon. T. V.
Denistoun, J.
Duncan, G.
Duncombe, T.
Dundas, D.
Easthope, Sir J.
Ebrington, Viscount
Elphinstone, H.
Ferguson, Col.
Fitzalan, Lord
Forster, M.
Fox, C. R.
French, F.
Gibson, T. M.
Gill, T.
Gordon, Lord F.
Granger, T. C.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Grosvenor, Lord R.
Guest, Sir J.
Hall, Sir B.
Harris, J. Q.
Hastie, A.
Hatton, V.
Hawes, B.
Hay, Sir A. L.
Heathcoat, J.
Heneage, E.
Hill, Lord M.
Hindley, C.
Holdsworth, J.
Howard, hn. C. W. G.
Howard, hon. H.
Hutt, W.
Jardine, W.
Johnson, Gen.
Johnstone, A.
Labouchere, rt. hn. H.
Larpent, Sir G. de H.
Layard, Capt.
Leader, J. T.
Mangles, R. D.
Marshall, W.
Martin, J.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Mitchell, T. A.
Morris, D.
Muntz, G. F.
Napier, Sir C.
O'Brien, W. Smith
O'Connell, Dan.
O'Connell M. J.
O'Connell, J.
O'Connor, Don
Ogle S. C. H.
Palmerston, Visct.
Pendarves, E. W. W.
Philips, M.
Pinney, W.
Plumridge, Capt.
Ponsonby, hon. J. G.
Powell, C.
Rawdon, Col.
Reade, W. M.
Redington, T. N.
Ricardo, J. L.
Rundle, J.
Russell, Lord J.
Scholefield, J.
Scott, R.
Smith, rt. hn. R. V.
Sombre, D. O. Dyce
Somerville, Sir W. M.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Strickland, Sir G.
Strutt, E.
Thorneley, T.
Towneley, J.
Troubridge, Sir E. T.
Tufnell, H.
Tuite, H. M.
Villiers, hon. C. P.
Wall, C. B.
Ward, H. G.
Wawn, J. T.
White, L.
White, H.
Wilson, M.
Wood, G. W.
Yorke, H. R.

TELLERS.

Roebuck,
Wakley, T.

List of the NOES.

Acland, Sir T. D.
Acland, T. D.
Ackers, J.
Adare, Visct.
Alexander, N.
Allix, J. P.
Antrobus, E.
Arkwright, G.
Ashley, Lord
Astell, W.
Baillie, Col.
Baillie, H. J.
Baird, W.
Balfour, J. M.
Baring, hon. W. B.
Baskerville, T. B. M.
Beckett, W.
Bell, M.
Beresford, Major
Blakemore, R.
Boldero, H. G.
Borthwick, P.
Botfield, B.
Broadley, H.
Broadwood, H.
Bruce, Lord E.
Buck, L. W.
Buckley, E.
Buller, Sir J. Y.
Campbell, A.
Chelsea, Viscount
Chetwode, Sir J.
Christmas, W.
Christopher, R. A.
Clerk, Sir G.
Clive, hon. R. H.
Collett, W. R.
Colvile, C. R.
Conolly, Col.
Corry, right hon. H.
Cresswell, B.
Cripps, W.
Crosse, T. B.
Damer, hon. Col.
Denison, E. B.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Drummond, H H.
Duncombe, hon. O.
Egerton, W. T.
Eliot, Lord
Emlyn, Viscount
Escott, B.
Feilden, W.
Ferrand, W. B.
Fitzroy, Capt.
Follett, Sir W. W.
Forbes, W.
Fuller, A. E.
Gaskell, J. Milnes
Gladstone, rt. hn. W. E.
Gordon, hon. Capt.
Goulburn, rt. hon. H.
Graham, rt. hn. Sir J.
Grant, Sir A. C.
Greenall, P.
Greene, T.
Grimsditch, T.
Grogan, E.
Halford, H.
Hamilton, W. J.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Hawkes, T.
Heneage, G. H. W.
Herbert, hon. S.
Hodgson, R.
Holmes, hn. W. A'Ct.
Hope, A.
Hope, G. W.
Hughes, W. B.
Jermyn, Earl
Johnson, W. G.
Kemble, H.
Knatchbull, right hon. Sir E.
Law, hon. C. E.
Leicester, Earl of
Lincoln, Earl of
Litton, E.
Lockhart, W.
Lopes, Sir R.
Lyall, G.
Lygon, hon. Gen.

Mackenzie, T.
Mackinnon, W. A.
Mahon, Viscount
Mainwaring, T.
Manners, Lord J.
March, Earl of
Marsham, Viscount
Martin, C. W.
Marton, G.
Milnes, R. M.
Morgan, O.
Munday, E. M.
Neville, R.
Nicholl, rt. hon. J.
Northland, Viscount
O'Brien, A. S.
Peel, rt. hn. Sir R.
Pollock, Sir F.
Praed, W. T.
Pringle, A.
Rae, rt. hn. Sir W.
Rashleigh, W.
Reid, Sir J. R.
Rous, hon. Capt.
Rushbrooke, Col.
Sandon, Viscount
Sheppard, T.
Shirley, E. J.
Shirley, E. P.
Smith, A.
Somerset, Lord G.
Stanley, Lord
Stanley, E.
Sutton, hon. H. M.
Taylor, T. E.
Tennent, J. E.
Thompson, Mr. Ald.
Tollemache, J.
Trollope, Sir J.
Trotter, J.
Verner, Col.
Waddington, H, S.
Walsh, Sir J. B.
Whitmore, T. C.
Wodehouse, E.
Wood, Col. T.
Wortley, hon. J. S.
Young, J.

TELLERS.

Fremantle, Sir T.
Baring, H.

Compulsory Attendance at Church.] Mr. *Monckton Milnes* said, it might be in the recollection of some Members of that House, that towards the end of the last Session, he gave notice of his intention to move for leave to bring in a Bill for the repeal of so much of certain acts of Elizabeth and James 1st, as inflicted penalties for the non-attendance on divine worship. The reason why he had abandoned that course and pursued that which he intended to follow on the present occasion, he would presently state to the House. The circumstances to which his motion applied, would be found stated in the sixth report of the Inspectors of Prisons, published last year; the case had attracted great attention, and the vigilant eye of the press, to which public justice owed so much, had been directed to it in such a manner as to render it impossible that the case should not come before Parliament in one way or other. He thought, therefore, that it was better that the case should be brought under the notice of the House by one who, as far as he is known at all, is known as a humble and attached member of the Church of England rather than by any one indifferent or even hostile to that sacred institution. The cases to which he particularly wished to advert, were stated in page 79 of the report, and are described by the inspector as follows:—

"Among other complaints made to me by prisoners, J. C. came forward, and stated, that he was placed in the Ecclesiastical Court, and sentenced to pay a fine of 1*s*., and 14*s*. costs; that he had been in prison ten weeks, and had no means of paying, and hoped that a representation might be made of his case, or he must remain a prisoner for ever. Upon referring to this man's commitment, I find that he was summarily convicted before two magistrates, that on the of June, being the Lord's-day, called Sunday, in the township of ———, did neglect to attend a church, or at some other place of religious worship, on the said day, he not having any reasonable excuse to be absent, and adjudged to forfeit and pay 1*s*., together with 14*s*. costs, and, in default, to be kept in prison until the said sums shall be paid. It appeared that the following number of persons had been committed for a similar offence, and been discharged upon payment of the fine and costs:—

Name.	When received in Prison.	Fine.		Costs.			Period of Confinement.
	1839.	*s.*	*d.*	*l.*	*s.*	*d.*	
J. B. .	February 12 . .	1	0	0	10	6	63 days.
J. S. .	„	1	0	0	10	6	61 days.
W. W. .	April 15 . . .	1	0	0	19	0	16 days.
J. S. .	April 22 . . .	1	0	0	13	0	12 days.
G. B. .	August 5 . . .	1	0	1	4	0	17 days.
J. K. .	August 6 . . .	1	0	0	11	0	2 days.
A. G. .	November 4 . .	1	0	0	17	6	16 days.
B. K. .	November 6 . .	1	0	1	7	0	26 days.
P. F. .	December 13 . .	1	0	0	12	6	3 days.
T. R. .	December 23 . .	1	0	0	16	0	27 days.
	1840.						
T. S. .	May 10 . . .	1	0	0	12	0	3 days.

The poverty of the prisoner J. C. appearing to be such as to leave no hope of his being able to pay the fine and costs, I decided on making a representation of his case to the Secretary of State, who was pleased to recommend him forthwith as a fitting object for her Majesty's pardon, and he was discharged in consequence."

He believed, that in all those cases the parties proceeded against were simple labouring men, who would have been totally incapable of paying the fines inflicted upon them, if the case had not attracted the attention of her Majesty's Ministers; and it may be remarked, that in the first case the man was kept in prison during the whole hay-time and harvest, and was thus presented from earning the means of his winter sustenance. He knew that there was a strong and natural feeling, above all with young Members of that House when such a case as this occurred, to apply an immediate remedy, and to endeavour to attach their names to some measure for amending the Criminal Law. But he could not conceal from himself the evils of *dilettante* legislation. Short experience and imperfect knowledge, actuated by motives, however honourable, can never make efficient and stable laws. He therefore felt that it would be unbecoming in a Member of so little weight to put himself forward in a case where he was sure that it was only necessary to mention the evil to induce the application of a remedy by the hand of those on whom that duty legitimately devolved, and he felt this the more strongly at a time when a government was in power in which he had so sincere a confidence. He trusted, that the House would not impute to him a feeling of presumption for bringing the case forward, or of weakness in transferring it from his own hands to the stronger ones of the right hon. Baronet, the Secretary for the Home Department. In a question of abuse of this nature, it was but natural that they should inquire what was the conduct of the magistrates. He had communicated with one of these magistrates, a gentleman who had addressed letters on the subject of this case to the editors of the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Morning Chronicle*. This gentleman was a most respectable and temperate man, and expressed his earnest desire that the case should be fully investigated. In one of these letters from Mr. Ashworth, dated September 16, 1841, he says:—

> "A man is brought before the magistrates charged with drunkenness in its most offensive form on the Sabbath, and with neglecting church. On inquiry it is found that this is his habitual practice, and that his conduct, in this state, renders him a pest to the neighbourhood. Perhaps even you will admit that such a character deserves punishment, and that he ought to be fined for drunkenness. Well, fine him. He refuses to pay, and has no goods on which to distrain. What then is to be done? Put him in the stocks, the law says; but we have no stocks, and the vagabond escapes scot free. To prevent this result and in respect to such characters only, recourse has been had to the statute enabling magistrates to fine for non-attendance at public worship, under which committals follow in case of non-payment. For pursuing this course you pronounce me unfit to remain on the bench, and you will, doubtless, think me still more unfit when I tell you, that though I exceedingly dislike the course, I am not prepared to relinquish it entirely, being determined to avail myself of the law, even in its defective state, and thereby punish such infamous characters as I have described."

Mr. Ashworth thus declared, that the law wanted amendment, and stated that the practice was general among the justices of peace. In a private communication which that gentleman made to him (Mr. Milnes), he stated, that on his appointment to the bench he found these fines regularly imposed by the magistrates for offences of this nature, and that he disapproved of the custom; but, finding the law so defective, and being asked whether he thought it right to allow offenders to escape, and being most anxious to ensure an orderly observance of the Sabbath, he was induced to acquiesce in the proceeding. He added, that he did not know as a magistrate how he could refuse to inflict the penalty when the case was clearly proved, and concluded with stating, that he should be glad of the success of any motion on the subject which would lead to an alteration of the law. He (Mr. Milnes) considered that this letter was honourable to the gentleman who who wrote it. He was sure the House also, now that it was made acquainted with the nature of these cases, would cordially join with him in calling for some alteration of the law. He believed that all he has now to do was to state very briefly the present anomalous condition of the law. The penalty for non-attendance on religious worship was imposed in the clause of the act of Elizabeth, called the Act of Uniformity, which says:—

> "Whosoever, having no lawful or reasonable excuse to be absent, shall forbear to resort to his parish church or chapel accustomed, or upon reasonable let thereof to some usual place where common prayer and such service of God shall be used in such time of let upon every Sunday and other days ordained and used to be kept as holy days, and then and there abide orderly and soberly during the time of the common prayer, preaching, or other service, shall incur the penalties of a Popish recusant."

And I need not tell the House how terrible a nature those penalties were. Any person leaving a church during the administration of divine service was equally liable with one who had absented himself altogether. But the summary conviction in these cases was under a clause of the Act of James 1st, which states the penalty for the first offence to be forfeiture of 12*d* leviable by the churchwardens of the parish where the offence is committed by way of distress, and the penalty may be levied by the warrant of one justice of the peace, and in default of goods to destrain on, the same justice may commit the offender to prison till payment of the forfeiture. By the Acts of Toleration passed in the reigns of William and Mary and Anne, the provisions of this Act are extended to all places of religious worship. He need not say how far the Uniformity Act was adhered to in the present day, nor what would be its operation if generally enforced. If it were carried out to its full extent by the churchwardens of the parish of St. George's, Hanover-square, and St. James's, Piccadilly, by their visiting the club houses during the times of divine worship, and enforcing the law against those they found there, perhaps there might be a great deal more to be said on the subject than in the case of these poor men. It was useless now to debate on the absurdity of such a law in the present day; although much, perhaps, might be said in defence of it at the period when it was enacted, as then the attendance on divine worship in the church might be regarded as a test of political opinion, and as a proof of loyalty and good citizenship. Those times, however, were gone by, and the enforcing such a law as that acted upon by the Rochdale magistrates could only be regarded as a remnant of persecution. He also submitted that this was not the time to put magistrates like Mr. Ashworth in such a situation as they had been by their interpretation of the law. The outcry against the great unpaid had indeed ceased, but it was not right to expose them to unnecessary unpopularity. He did not think it necessary to attack the principle of the Act of Uniformity, as he did not think that it necessarily bore the interpretation which had been attached to it. He thought that in its free interpretation every man should be considered a member of the Church of England unti he committed some act or deed which proved the contrary. He trusted that the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department would devise some means of getting rid of the present evil without touching the spirit of that important act. We should be chary of repealing laws merely because we held them to be obsolete. He need not tell the House that this was not the time nor the age to enforce religious belief by the means of penal enactments. If one truth was written on the page of history in more striking characters than another, it was, that when a church or a religious body endeavoured to enforce a belief in its opinions by persecution, it created a totally contrary feeling. Whether to oppress or to uphold religion violence is equally impotent. All the energetic rigours of the Inquisition have not saved the church of Spain from the oppressions and confiscations of an Espartero, all the terrorism of the penal laws has not shaken Romanism in Ireland. He believed that the Church of England was strong by the toleration which she had manifested, and was convinced that such acts as these only brought the Church into disrepute; he therefore called upon the right hon. Baronet, whose executive talents had been admitted by both parties in that House, not to shrink from legislative exertion in this matter, but as speedily as possible to bring forward some measures to get rid of a state of things as obnoxious to the principles of British freedom as injurious to the best interests of the Church of England. He should conclude with moving an Address for

> "Copy of the warrant on which J. C——, or J. Carlton, was committed, at Rochdale, on the 29th day of June, 1840, by Clement Royds and William Chadwick, esquires, for neglecting to attend divine worship at Butterworth, in the county of Lancaster."

Sir *J. Graham* was sure that the House would give every credit to the motives of his hon. Friend the Member for Pontefract, who had so ably brought this case before the House. According to the facts of the case the parties imprisoned had had a very severe and unjust punishment inflicted upon them. It appeared that these poor men had been brought before the magistrates for one offence, and had been punished for another. He could not too strongly condemn the practice that should proceed to search and find a statute, fallen almost into desuetude, for the purpose of inflicting punishments on parties not brought before them for the offence for which they were punished. Such a practice he considered to be unjust, nor did he think that the infliction of such penalties was, in any degree, applicable to the time and age in which we lived. He did not believe that the infliction of temporal penalties was at all applicable to the non-performance of a personal religious duty—nor did he think that it conduced to the maintenance of the Established Church nor religious worship. His hon. Friend had called attention to the Act of Uniformity, and had alluded to the extension to Dissenters, in proof that the oaths of supremacy and allegiance had been taken, which it was not at all times possible for them to show. All parties, however, were liable to penalties if these oaths had not been taken; and he believed that a very large portion of the Members of the House would have been liable to the penalties, through the non-attendance on religious worship on Wednesday last, if informations had been laid against them. He did not say that the state of the law was such as should be allowed to continue, but when they had to deal with such important acts as those of Uniformity and Toleration, great caution should be used. He would not hastily pronounce how a remedy could be applied to this grievance, it was sufficient for him to admit that an evil of great magnitude existed, and it was the duty of the executive to find a remedy and apply it. He should not oppose the motion.

Motion agreed to.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, February 14, 1842.

MINUTES.] 3ª· Borough Improvemets; Building Regulations; Appropriation Act Amendment.

Lord Monson first sat in Parliament after the death of his Cousin.

Petitions presented. By Lord Strafford, from Presbyterians of Donegal, and Londonderry, by the Marquess of Clanricarde, from Tyrone, and by Viscount Melbourne, from Presbyterians of Antrim, for Legalizing the Marriage of Dissenters.—By Viscount Melbourne, from Leeds, and other places, and by Lord Brougham, from Jedburgh, Kelso, Kendal, and other places, for the Total Repeal of the Corn-laws.—From Kendal, in favour of Free Trade.

MARRIAGE LAW—(IRELAND).] Viscount *Melbourne* presented a petition from the Ministers and other Members of the Presbyteries of Antrim and Mayo to settle the Marriage-law in Ireland. He understood that it was the intention of her Majesty's Ministers to bring in a bill to give relief to the petitioners, and he thought that nothing was more necessary or proper than to apply an immediate remedy.

Lord *Campbell* agreed it was essential that a remedy should be applied as soon as possible, but, at the same time, it was desirable first to ascertain what the law really was, for he might, with all respect for the learned Lords who had given a recent decision, doubt whether marriages by dissenting clergymen in Ireland between members of the Established Church and dissenters were void. If there was no statute to the contrary, the canon law would be in force, which constituted an open avowal of marriage followed by cohabitation, a legal marriage for all purposes. Certain marriages by Roman Catholic clergymen and degraded priests were made void by statute; but he was not aware of any statute which applied to the marriage of a member of the Church of England and a Dissenter by a Presbyterian parson; and he believed that the former decision of the Irish judges, under which men, who had contracted such marriages, had been convicted of bigamy, and were now undergoing the punishment of transportation, was more to be respected than the more recent decision.

The *Lord Chancellor*, in consequence of the observations of his noble Friend the other evening, had sent to Ireland to learn the precise facts of the case, and the terms of the decision. He had not yet received an answer, but the moment he received the reply, he would take the advice of the law officers of the Crown, and bring in a bill either declaring what the law is, or enacting what it shall be.

The Marquess of *Clanricarde* hoped that no time would be unnecessarily lost, for he was afraid that evils were even now arising in consequence of the decision.

THE CORN-LAWS—PETITIONS.] Lord *Campbell* presented a petition from Edinburgh for the total and immediate repeal of the Corn-laws, and observed, that considering the system which had been pursued in this country for so long a time, it would be difficult to resort to a total repeal, but he could not support any plan which did not give us a free trade in corn at all times. Any measure which merely admitted a free trade in times of extreme scarcity, would not be productive of steadiness of price, would not promote the sale of our manufactures in foreign countries, and would in no degree prevent the evil which had been frequently experienced under our present law in our monetary system. He would willingly agree to such a modification of the law as would at all times admit corn on the payment of a fixed duty, and at the same time he would give his strenuous opposition to a sliding scale.

Laid on the table.

BUILDINGS REGULATION AND BOROUGH IMPROVEMENTS.] The Marquess of *Normanby* presented a petition from the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of Birmingham, praying that the powers under the bill might not be transferred from them to commissioners, and to be heard by counsel against the bill. Although he did not think the change made by their Lordships a wise one, he was not disposed at that stage of the bill to move its restoration to the state in which he originally brought it in, in accordance with the prayer of the petitioners; he trusted that if the alteration should be made elsewhere, their Lordships would agree to it.

He would, therefore, now move the third reading of the Buildings Regulations Bill. He wished for one moment to call the attention of the noble Duke opposite to a subject intimately connected with the public health, and, therefore, with the object of this bill—the state of the public burial grounds. He had, in the last Session, in answer to a question, stated his intention on the part of the then Government to bring in a bill on the subject. Since that he had received communications from many places in favour of some regulations and among others, that very day from Mr. Fripp of Bristol, a gentleman well known in that town for his participation in the statistical inquiries, pressing for a legislative measure; and the right reverend Prelate (the Bishop of London,) had urged its propriety. If he now declined to introduce a measure, it was not on account of the labour incident to such [a task, but because he thought that success would be better attained if the bill were brought in by her Majesty's Government, and because there must be some parts of the bill which made it desirable that it should originate elsewhere.

Bill read a third time and passed—as was also on the motion of the Marquess of Normanby, the Borough Improvements Bill.

Case of the Creole.] Lord *Brougham* had now to bring before their Lordships a subject to which he had on the first night of the Session called their attention; and having then entered at large into the question, he would say but a very few words upon the present occasion in moving for the copy of any correspondence between the Colonial-office, and the Governor of the Bahama Islands, relative to the late arrival of the Creole at Nassau. His noble Friend, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, would state whether there was any such correspondence or not; and, if there was, whether he had any objection to its production, for if his noble Friend thought, that the production might have any injurious tendency, he would not press for it. In making the present motion he might say, that having again and again considered the question in all its bearings, and had an opportunity of referring to the various authorities which he understood had been cited to raise a doubt on the opposite side, and which, when examined, really amounted to little or nothing; the result of that consideration had been only to confirm, to increase, if it were possible, his confidence, in the opinion he had given on the first night of the Session. It might be perfectly true, that considered as a matter of international law alone, a foreign country may by treaty, have a right to demand of us the surrender of a person taking refuge in our territories on account of an offence alleged to be committed within their territories—it might become necessary to consider the right of one nation to require from another the delivery up of fugitives taking refuge within their territories; that was one question, and he cared not how that question was disposed of, as regarded his present purpose; but there was another question to be considered, which was wholly unavoidable. What right existed, under the municipal law of this country, to seize and deliver up criminals taking refuge there? What right had the Government to detain, still less to deliver them up? Whatever right one nation had against another nation—even by treaty, which would give the strongest right—there was, by the municipal law of the nation, no power to execute the obligation of the treaty. If such a treaty existed between any two countries, say between America and this country, and no Act of Parliament had passed enabling the Government in either country to perform its conditions, that treaty became utterly unavailable, because the law of the land prevented the possibility of its being executed. Suppose it was clear, and that no doubt existed, that a treaty were in force binding on the two parties (and such an obligation would be much more clear than any that could be pretended, under the general law of nations, the common international law), and suppose either party had omitted to take power from its own Legislature, to carry the treaty into execution, the mere existence of the treaty would not enable that power to carry the treaty into effect. The treaty would be a dead letter if the municipal law of that country did not authorise the fulfilment of its provisions. It was necessary to say so much, because he thoughtsome of those who had argued the subject, particularly in America, had not kept the two questions of international law and of municipal law sufficiently apart. It was necessary that a municipal law for detaining and giving up criminals should exist, as well as the law of nations. Such a municipal law did not exist in this country. There was no power by our municipal law to seize, still less to surrender any person having committed an offence, however grave that offence might be, within the jurisdiction or limits of any other country: whether he were an alien or not, there was no power to give him up until the Legislature of this country, should arm the Government with a power to do so. He had on the first night of the Session referred to two cases, the acts of 1797 and 1802, passed for the purpose of arming the Government with the power of performing their obligations, contracted by Mr. Jay's treaty, and the treaty of Amiens, and without which acts it would have been impossible to have performed those obligations. He had stated, that the only doubt in his mind with regard to the case of the Creole, arose from the suggestion, that a piratical offence had been committed. No doubt the case of piracy was in two particulars different from the general law, respecting charges against aliens for crimes committed beyond the jurisdiction of the country; for whereas in any other case they had no power to seize or detain, yet in a case of piracy, although the party was an alien, they had power to seize and detain. That was one particular in which a difference existed; but another particular was the power of trying the alien pirate, and therefore he had no doubt, that even in the case of piracy, we had not, and ought not to have, the power to deliver up, because where the offence was piracy we had not only the power of seizing and detaining the person, but we could send him to his trial; so that here was no deficient jurisdiction, and no fear that the criminal would go unpunished, whilst in the case of a murder alleged to have been committed by an alien in a foreign country, there was no power, either of arresting, or of bringing to trial. It was impossible to deny, and he did not deny, that this was a state of law which ought not to continue. He thought it highly expedient; he thought the interests of justice required, and the rights of good neighbourhood required, that in two countries bordering on one another, as the United States, Canada, and even that in England and in the European countries of France, Holland, and Belgium—there ought to be laws on both sides giving power, under due regulations and safeguards, to each government to secure persons who have committed offences in the territory of one, and taken refuge in the territory of the other. He could hardly imagine how nations could maintain the relationship which ought to exist between one civilised country and another without some such power; at present, however, such a power did not exist in this country; so that the whole territory of one country became an asylum for fugitives from justice in another. But as to the laws now in force, there could be no doubt; such a proceeding as seizing and detaining, much more of delivering up fugitives, was wholly illegal. He understood, that in the year 1822, a law was passed by one of the border states of America, the state of New York, conferring the power in question on the Government. About the same time a law was passed in one of our provinces of Canada conferring the same power, and in consequence of those two laws there was a mutual giving up of persons charged with offences. A similar law had been passed in Belgium, in 1833, but only under certain restrictions, and operating only in cases where certain proceedings had already taken place with respect to the persons charged; and, above all, only in cases where there was a reciprocity of jurisprudence on this head between the two countries. It was on these grounds, that he had troubled the House with observations on the subject, and on these grounds he adhered with entire confidence to the opinion he had stated on the first night of the Session.

The Earl of *Aberdeen*, in answer to the question of his noble and learned Friend, begged to inform the House that communications had taken place between the governor of the Bahamas and her Majesty's Government on the subject. Perhaps his noble and learned Friend would not press for the production of those communications in the present stage of the transaction, particularly when he informed the House what the course of her Majesty's Government had been on this question. As their Lordships might well imagine, her Majesty's Government had given the question their most serious and anxious attention, and after taking advantage of all the assistance which they thought desirable on the subject, they had satisfied themselves that by the laws of this country there is no machinery or authority for bringing those persons to trial for mutiny and murder, still less for delivering them up or detaining them in custody. His noble Friend, the Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, had therefore sent out instructions for releasing those persons who had hitherto been detained. He was not certain whether under any colonial law these persons might be brought to trial. It was possible, as the noble and learned Lord had cited the existence of such a law in the Canadas, it might exist. He was not, however, aware of any such law. If such a law did exist, it was probable it would be acted upon; but, should there not be such a law, directions had been sent by the Government to release the parties.

Lord *Denman* said, that as his noble and learned Friend had postponed this motion on account of his absence on a former evening, he would express his opinion on the law of England as applicable to the law on this subject, which, however, he would do with the greatest reluctance if it admitted of the smallest doubt. He believed that all Westminster Hall, including the judicial bench, were unanimous in holding the opinion expressed by the noble Earl; and that, in this country there was no right of delivering up, indeed, no means of securing persons accused of crimes committed in foreign countries. The matter was under discussion frequently when the Alien Bill had been year after year before the House of Commons, and the lawyers of all parties had come to the same conclusion. To show that this view had not been adopted from political bias, he would cite a speech of Sir C. Wetherell, a man not likely to be so influenced, who had given the strongest opinion, and applied it to an example, which he must have regarded with abhorrence. He had said,

> "If aliens are sent out of this country because they are unpopular at foreign courts, the powers of the act were abused. That they should be accused of offence in foreign countries, was no reason for refusing them protection here. The regicides of Louis XVI., if they had sought shelter here, ought not to have been sent away; exiles for crime ought to find an asylum in this country."*

Nor was this any new doctrine; there was a remarkable passage in the Third Institute of Lord Coke,† and one which could not be read without interest:—

> "It is holden, and so hath been resolved that kingdoms in league with one another are sanctuaries for servants or subjects flying for safety from one kingdom to another, and upon demand made by them are not by the laws and liberties of kingdoms to be delivered."

And then, founding the law on Scripture, he added,

> "This (some held) is grounded upon the law in Deuteronomy, '*Non trades servum domino suo qui ad te confugerit.*'"

He then went on to mention two cases which occurred about the same time:—

> "When Queen Elizabeth's ambassador demanded of the French king Morgan and others of her subjects that had committed treason against her, he answered, that if they acted in France he would proceed against them, adding, '*Omnia regna profugis esse libera, regum interesse ut sui quisque regni libertate, tucatur!*' and appealed to Elizabeth's own conduct in affording an asylum to the Prince de Condi and other Huguenots who had been in arms against the French crown."

Nor were these opinions confined to the lawyers of Europe; great lawyers of America, men distinguished by their profound erudition, whose decisions are so highly respected among us, and whose valuable works on great legal questions are studied and consulted in this country with the highest advantage, held the same doctrine,—indeed

> "Chancellor Kent, in his *Commentaries on American Law* (1836), appears to incline to the opinion of Grotius and Vattel, against that of other eminent jurists, that persons accused of crimes ought to be delivered up to the country where they are accused; and one case appears to have been decided by himself when he held his office in conformity with that doctrine. But it may be remarked, that the peculiar constitution of a federal government, comprehending many states with various laws, renders any decision, however respectable, of less extensive application, at least till all the particular provisions existing when it was made are fully canvassed. But Justice Story, in his more recent edition of the *Conflict of Laws* (1841), concludes a discussion on this subject by citing the passage from Lord Coke, adding, in terms, one chief justice in America has adhered to the same doctrine in a very elaborate judgment; that the reasoning of another chief justice, in a leading case, leads to the same conclusion, and that it stands indirectly confirmed by a majority of the judges of the Supreme Court of the United States, in a very recent case of the deepest interest."

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* Hansard (New Series), vol. vii. p. 1722.

† Page 180.

Therefore, although distinguished jurists may feel a desire for some arrangement for the surrender of foreign criminals, it would seem that the municipal law of America rests on the same principles as our own, which, as he had already stated, recognised no right, and provided no machinery by which the subjects of another state seeking refuge here could be given up to the country to which they belonged. He had, therefore come prepared respectfully to warn Secretaries of State, if it had not been rendered unnecessary by what had passed that they could not seize or detain aliens seeking refuge here without subjecting themselves to actions for damages for false imprisonment, and without further incurring the risk of a still heavier and more awful responsibility; for if a man attempted to seize an alien under such authority he might resist, and if death ensued, he would be justified in inflicting it, while those who ordered his arrest and detention would be liable to be tried for murder. He agreed with his noble and learned Friend, that the *comity* of nations, might be properly employed in considering of treaties and laws which would allow nations to seize and give up to each other their respective criminals. But this could only be done on the supposition that the laws of all nations should be reasonable and just, for no country could be justified in enforcing those laws which it believed to be founded on injustice, oppression, and cruelty. Some few great criminals had possibly been given up, without notice; but he believed that the United States of America had refused to give up an English subject charged with forgery, because they disapproved of the punishment of death for that crime, and until the internal law of all countries was such that each would have no objection to adopt it, he feared that this desirable object could not be accomplished. He indulged a hope that those distinguished persons, the judges and jurists in America, who had been referred to, would, in common with those of other countries, apply their minds to these considerations. But he could not help observing, that the general subject was not without its difficulties, and with reference to that country, that the existence of slavery, and much more the existence of the slave trade, the encouragement given to it, were inseparable perhaps also (as it may be thought) with some degree of encouragement, may throw obstacles in the way of such a law. It was clear that every form of crime might include questions of slavery and the slave trade, and equally clear, that no English Government or Legislature would, in the slightest degree directly or indirectly, consent to the promotion of that detestable traffic, or in any way become either policemen or gaolers, to enforce the rights of the master, as they were called, over the slave. With reference to the present occasion, he, for his part, rejoiced to hear, that two hundred human beings had succeeded in rescuing themselves from slavery, however all men must regret that any blood had been shed. He threw that out by way of protest against being supposed to admit any crime in those persons accused, or to enter at all into the merits of the particular case, his opinion on which he should suspend till all the facts were made known, either by a trial for piracy here, or in any other form of proceeding. But having said these few words on the general question, he had thought it right to observe that the existence of this most nefarious traffic presented a most formidable objection to the establishment of a general jurisdiction, by which punishment might be inflicted on all such offences wherever committed, as all the nations of the earth are equally interested in suppressing.

Lord *Campbell* said, that after the statement of their opinions by his two noble and learned Friends, he should not have felt it necessary to address their Lordships, if it had not been asserted, and widely circulated, that he had, when Attorney-General, advised that men similarly circumstanced should be sent home for trial. Nothing could be more contrary to the fact than such a statement. He had never given any opinion of the kind. On the contrary, he had held that, by the law of nations, no state had a right to demand from another the surrender of any of its subjects; and that in the case of England, the municipal law did not authorize or enable the executive to comply with any such demand. He agreed with the Lord Chief Justice, that it might be very convenient to have treaties, under which persons accused of murder, and other high crimes, should be surrendered. but such treaties would not justify the demand being acted on, until the municipal law provides the means for carrying the treaties into execution. Without an

Act of Parliament there was no authority for giving up a refugee to any foreign state. Mr. Martens, an eminent professor, of the University of Gottingen, put the question in the clearest point of view. He says,

> "There is no case in which a sovereign is obliged to send criminals for punishment to their own country, or to the place where the crime was committed—not even if they had been condemned before they made their escape."
>
> "To send criminals to be tried in their own country has never been granted, excepting in virtue of a treaty,"

His noble and learned Friend (Lord Denman) had paid a deserved compliment to the legal authorities of the United States. Mr. Burke was one of the first to do the Americans justice in this respect, and there was no doubt that their treatises on certain branches of the law were superior to our own. One of the ablest of these writers was the present American minister at Berlin, who, in a work he had produced on international law, had laid it down that—

> "No sovereign state is bound, unless by special compact, to deliver up persons, whether its own subjects or foreigners, charged with or convicted of crimes committed in another country, upon the demands of a foreign state or its officers of justice. The extradition of persons charged with or convicted of criminal offences affecting the general peace and security of society is, however, voluntarily practised by certain states as a matter of general convenience and *comity*."

For his own part, he should like to see some general law enacted, and held binding on all states, that each should surrender to the demand of the others all persons charged with serious offences, except political. This, however, he feared, was a rule or law which it would be difficult to get all nations to concur in. To show how cautious states should be in making such concessions he would mention a case which occurred when he was Attorney-general. A treaty had been agreed upon between the state of New York, and the province of Canada, by which the Government of each agreed, reciprocally, to deliver up the citizens or subjects of the other against whom grand juries had found a bill, and who had sought refuge within the territories of the other. It happened that a slave had escaped from his master in the state of New York, and got to Canada. To facilitate his escape, he rode a horse of his master's for a part of the way, but turned him back on his reaching the frontier. The authorities of New York well knew that England would not give up a runaway slave, and that, as such, they could not claim him under the treaty; they therefore had a bill of indictment against him before a New York grand jury for stealing the horse, though it was clear the *animus furandi* was wanting. The grand jury, however, found a true bill against him for the felony, and he was claimed under the treaty. The governor, under such circumstances, refused to give him up until he had consulted the Government in England. He (Lord Campbell) was consulted, and gave it as his opinion, that the man ought not to be given up, as the true bill, where no felony had been committed, did not bring the case within the treaty. The man was not given up, and there the matter rested. This, he repeated, showed the necessity of the greatest caution where reciprocal rights of surrender were granted between states. As to the other question, supposed to arise out of the facts connected with the Creole, he supposed that no more would be heard of the claim of compensation for slaves liberated on their arrival in an English port. While slavery existed in any of the territories of Great Britain, the *lex loci* might perhaps prevail; but there was an end of slavery, and a slave was as much free when he arrived in the Bahamas or at Bermuda, as if he had reached Portsmouth or Plymouth. No wrong having been committed, there must be an end of the notion of compensation. Such was his decided opinion, and he trusted that this affair of the Creole would be no obstacle to an amicable adjustment of all differences between the two countries.

Lord *Cottenham* said, that after the speeches of his noble and learned Friends, it would be unnecessary for him to take up their Lordships' time by offering any observations, unless he should find it necessary to reply to the remarks of any noble and learned Lord who might perhaps take a different view of the question. If no objection should be made to the opinions given by his noble and learned Friends, it would be unnecessary for him to add anything to what was already so well said.

The *Lord Chancellor* apprehended that he was the only law Lord in the House who had not yet given his opinion. He had been consulted upon the question, as well as the Attorney and Solicitor-general, and, without pretending to state the terms in which their opinion had been given, he might say that it fully agreed with what had been advanced by noble and learned Lords who had already spoken. He did not think that a second opinion could be entertained.

Lord *Brougham.* His noble and learned Friend (Lord Denman) was right in supposing he had alluded to Chancellor Kent's very able work. But it was to be observed, that though no one carried the doctrine of an international right of surrender, so far as this able lawyer, he admitted the necessity of a municipal law, in order to arm the Government with the power. He (Lord Brougham) felt authorised by Lord Wynford and Lord Abinger, who had both attended last Friday, for the purpose of stating their opinions, that they took the same view of the question with himself, and the noble and learned Lords, who had addressed the House. Lord Wynford, indeed, as regarded the surrender of slaves, had many years ago delivered an able judgment in the Court of King's Bench, in the case of Forbes *v.* Cochrane, extending the principle of Somerset's case to slaves escaping and received on board of British ships. But as to slaves not charged with offences, no one affected now to entertain any doubt.

Motion withdrawn.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, February 14, 1842.

MINUTES.] New Members. W. H. Gregory, Esq., for Dublin; Sir T. E. Colebrooke, bt., for Taunton.

New Writ. For Salop (Northern Division), in the room of the Earl of Darlington, now Duke of Cleveland.

Bill. 1^{a}. Duchy of Cornwall.—*Reported,*—Loan Societies.

Petitions presented. By Mr. Hindley (33), by Mr. Brotherton (14), by Mr. Wilson, Mr. Scholefield, Mr. C. Wood, Mr. G. Berkeley (47), by Mr. Thorneley (16), by Mr. M. Philips, from Manchester, and by several other Members, from a great number of places, all praying for the Total and Immediate Abolition of the Corn and Provision Laws.—By Mr. Ewart, and other Members, from Montrose, Kirkaldy, and Glasgow (132), for a Revision of the Import Duties.—By Mr. Ord, from Millers of Newcastle, to preserve the Home Manufacture of Flour.—By Colonel Conolly, from Presbyterians of Donegal, by Colonel Rawdon, from Presbyterians of Armagh, and by Mr. Shaw, from Presbyterians of Dublin, for Legalizing Marriages by Dissenting Ministers.—By Mr. Wakley, from Ayr, for Universal Suffrage.—By Sir H. Fleetwood, from Preston, for the re-appointment of the Committee on West-India Mails.—From Lord Mayor, &c. of London, for Prohibiting Burials in City.—From Southwark, for Redemption of Metropolitan Bridge Tolls.

PRIVATE BILLS.] Lord *Granville Somerset* moved the following resolutions:

"That with respect to all petitions for private bills presented in the present Session which proceed from the same parties, or some of them, and which are substantially for the same objects as they were sought by any bills which had passed the second reading in the last Session of the last Parliament, and were pending at the dissolution of that Parliament, a compliance with the requisite standing orders preparatory to the introduction of such bills in that Session, be deemed a sufficient compliance with the standing orders of this House, so as to authorise the introduction of such bills in the present Session, provided it shall be proved that notices of the intended application to introduce such bills shall have been given in the *London Gazette* and some newspaper of the county or districts to which such bills relate, in the months of October or November last.

"That with respect to such petitions the minutes of the proceedings of, or the minutes of evidence taken by, the committee on petitions for private bills in the last Session of the last Parliament, be taken by the committee on petitions for private bills in the present Session, as evidence of the compliance with the said standing orders; but such committee may call for further evidence, if in any case they may deem it necessary.

"That the committee upon any private bill do examine, in the first place, whether the said bill be for the same purpose as any bill which was presented in the last Session of the last Parliament, and contain the same clauses and provisions as were contained in such former bill in the last stage of its proceeding, and whereupon any proceedings were pending on the dissolution of the last Parliament; and in such case that all minutes of evidence, together with any documents therein referred to, which were taken before the former committee on such bill, be received in evidence of the allegations therein contained.

"That, to enable the parties promoting any such bill to avail themselves of the last mentioned resolution, they shall, after the introduction of such bill, and previously to the second reading thereof, give notice, once in the *London Gazette,* and once in some newspaper usually circulated in the district or districts to which the bill specially relates, that it is their intention to proceed with the bill, and to avail themselves of the above resolution: and that the committee on the bill do examine how far such resolution has been complied with, and do report the same to the House on the report of the bill."

Agreed to.

THE STADE DUTIES.] Mr. *Hutt*

wished to put a question to the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government, of considerable importance, as regarded our commercial relations with the Northern Powers of Europe. He wished to know whether her Majesty's Ministers had acknowledged the right of the crown of Hanover to levy tolls on vessels passing up the Elbe, commonly called the Stade duties, except those allowed by the treaty concluded between Sweden and Hamburgh in 1691, the maximum of which was one-sixteenth per cent. *ad valorem.*

Sir *R. Peel* replied that the subject was then under the consideration of her Majesty's Government. A commissioner had lately arrived in this country from Hanover, to arrange the subject with the English Government; it therefore would be premature to make any declaration while negotiations were taking place.

Corn-law. Question.] Sir *David Roche* was understood to ask when the proposed Corn-bill of the right hon. Baronet would come into operation, and also when he intended to bring forward his promised measure respecting cattle?

Sir *R. Peel* understood the hon. Gentleman to ask him when he intended to propose that the proposed measure respecting the Corn-laws should come into operation. In reply, he would only observe that he did not see why the law should not apply immediately on the passing of the act. With respect to the second part of the question, he would only observe, that he had never promised to introduce a bill respecting the importation of cattle. All that he had said on the subject was in answer to an observation of the hon. Member for Manchester, when he stated that he did not see the advantage of keeping up a system of absolute prohibition on foreign cattle.

Sugar Colonies.] Mr. *G. Berkeley*, who spoke amidst some noise, was understood to ask the noble Lord, the Secretary for the Colonies, whether he was aware that in some of the West India colonies the cost of making a hogshead of sugar was really greater than its value in the home market? and also whether he were aware that there at present existed great facilities for the agents of proprietors in the colonies to defraud the owners of estates by means of false registers of the cost of production? and, lastly, he wished to know whether the Government had in contemplation any plan for the importation of labourers into the West India colonies?

Lord *Stanley*, in reply, observed that, as the questions put to him were of very great importance, he could not with propriety answer them simply in the negative or affirmative, but would, with the permission of the House, do so as shortly as possible. He believed, that the hon. Gentleman's first question applied only to the colonies of Demerara and Berbice, and not to all the West-Indian colonies. He was aware of the fact of the enormous expense of cultivating certain estates in consequence of the competition for labour enhancing the cost of producing sugar. A large body of planters had made general complaints on the subject, and had stated, that on some estates—he believed, six in number—in consequence of the competition for labour, and high wages given, the expense of cultivation was found to have been much greater than the value of the produce. Under such a state of things, it was obvious, that cultivation could not go on for any time. It was, therefore, clear, that some steps must be taken to prevent competition going on in this way, although he doubted whether the planters proposed to take the best mode of effecting this object. The second question related to the opportunities which dishonest agents might have in defrauding the owners of estates in this country. He did not doubt, that absentee proprietors in the West Indies, as anywhere else, could not compete successfully with the resident proprietors as regarded the superintendence of their property, and, of course with reference to the absentees, it must be much more in the power of the agent to make false returns, than it could be to persons residing on the spot. If he might be allowed to offer an opinion on this subject, he would say, that in the present very critical situation—which he did not deny, and which was much to be lamented—of the West-Indian colonies, and with the much greater facilities of communication between them and this country, which had lately been introduced, it would be highly desirable to induce the personal attention of owners of estates in the West Indies to their property there. He believed, that much might be effected by a personal visit, as regarded a saving in the management of their estates in various charges, which it would be difficult for him, or for any one in that House, to form an accurate opinion of, or to enumerate, and that it would tend to bring about a great moral change, which he believed was inevitable and desirable, namely, a transfer of the management of property, from the hands of agents to those of resident tenants. That change he believed to be now in progress, and he believed it to be most desirable for proprietors themselves, and for the public generally. He would venture to say this, with respect to the expense of cultivation, that there was no single instance in which this natural consequence had not followed as effect and cause—namely, that where they gave to the negro labourer an interest in the amount of work to be performed, and in the amount of produce raised, there they would obtain constant and industrious labourers; but where they did not give that interest, there they would not obtain them. The amount of competition carried on there at present was ruinous. The planters were competing with each other in this way, by employing their labourers for a certain time, and paying them accordingly, and not by giving the labourers an interest in their work, by rewarding them according to the actual portion done. This, he thought, was a great cause of the ruinous expense which the planters were now subject to in the West-India colonies. With regard to the importation of labourers, he considered the emigration from Sierra Leone and the coast of Africa, had been most useful and beneficial for the persons importing; from all classes, with the exception of European emigrants, the Government had received the most satisfactory account with regard to their health and prospects. But the hon. Gentleman must be aware there were great difficulties in promoting general emigration from the coast of Africa, or from any quarter in which it was not in the power of the Government to see, that the emigration was really free, really voluntary, and really and entirely at the option of the parties emigrating. He would not say, it might not be possible or advisable even to extend the system in operation at Sierra Leone, to the subordinate colony on the Gambia; but the hon. Gentleman must allow him to say, in regard to her Majesty's other settlements on the coast of Africa, which possessed no land beyond that on which the colony actually stood, and which were in the centre of a population in whose laws domestic slavery was closely interwoven, there was great difficulty in sanctioning the system of emigration from these districts. Although it might be highly beneficial to the emigrant going out, it was almost impossible to avoid one of two fevils, or perhaps both; either that these settlements should become the refuge of fugitive slaves from all quarters around, and thereby bring down upon the colony, the jealousy of the chiefs of the country; or, if that were not the case, the emigration would not be voluntary, but a forced emigration, giving encouragement to the sale of slaves, by those chiefs who possessed a property in almost the whole of the population. He had answered the question to the best of his power, and hoped, that he had not occupied too much of the time of the House, but he felt, that these were points on which it was necessary to state distinctly what were the views of her Majesty's Government on a subject so intimately connected with the office he had the honour to fill.

CORN IMPORTED INTO CANADA.] Mr. *Labouchere* wished to ask a question of the right hon. the Vice President of the Board of Trade, respecting a portion of the measure which he introduced the other other evening on the subject of the regulation of the colonial duties, and which had some bearing on the question of the Corn-laws. The House was aware that at present the importation of corn and flour from the United States into Canada was entirely free, and that therefore the people of Canada could consume American flour, and send the corn of their own produce to this country on paying the 5*s*. duty. Did he understand the effect of schedule of duties, laid on the table of the House, would be to impose a duty of 3*s*. on all American wheat and flour introduced into Canada? If this were the case, it had a strong bearing on the Corn question, and it had excited much attention out of doors.

Mr. *Gladstone* said, the right hon. Gentleman had rightly understood the proposition. Undoubtedly the resolution as it stood did propose a duty of 3*s*. a quarter on American wheat imported into Canada. That was a part of the scheme as announced by him on a former evening. But he had not given his opinion upon that subject, nor had he stated whether that particular matter of detail in the resolutions had been irrevocably determined upon by the Government or not. It stood with the rest; and he was now in communication with parties, many of whom thought their interests were affected by different parts of those resolutions. When the day arrived on which he should have to ask the attention of the House again to the subject, he would be prepared to state whether that proposition would be persisted in or not.

IMPORTATION OF FLOUR — (IRELAND).] Mr. *Labouchere* wished to ask the right hon. Baronet, whether he was prepared to answer the question which he had put to him a few nights ago, respecting the importation of flour into Ireland.

Sir *R. Peel* said, by the existing law the importation of flour into Great Britain was permitted under certain conditions, but it was wholly prohibited in Ireland. The question asked by the right hon. Gentleman was whether or not that prohibition ought in his opinion to continue. He had looked at the question since the right hon. Gentleman had asked for an answer. He knew that the Members for Ireland felt a great interest in the subject, so much so that in the course of last Session a bill of the right hon. Gentleman was mainly opposed on the ground that there ought to be no partial alteration of the law. He felt bound to state, in reply to the right hon. Gentleman, that in revising the whole system of laws regulating the importation of corn, he could not maintain that exemption of Ireland which existed under the present law. Ireland was an exporting country of flour, and he did not see why there should be any special regulation with regard to it. He, therefore, thought that in any revision of the Corn-laws Ireland ought to be placed on a footing with this country.

RULES OF THE HOUSE.] Mr. *Roebuck* said, before the first Order of the Day was read, he wished to put a question to the Speaker. It had been attributed to the Speaker, that he had declared his opinion that no Member of that House had the power to move in the House, as distinguished from the House being in committee, such a resolution as that there should be no duty levied on foreign corn. He wished to know from the Speaker whether it were not competent for him (Mr. Roebuck), or any other Member, to move in the House, as distinguished from committee, such a resolution as, "that this House is not prepared to adopt any plan proposing that there should be any duty on corn imported from foreign countries?" He wished to know whether he could not propose in the House a resolution of this description, distinct altogether from that of the noble Lord the Member for London, which was against the principle of a sliding scale.

The *Speaker* said, according to the standing orders, the House must resolve itself into a committee of the whole House before any resolution could be considered that had reference to trade or taxation. At the same time, it was quite possible so to frame a resolution on such a subject as that an hon. Member should be able to take the sense of the House on the general question of duty or no duty on corn. But such a course though possible, was not regular. The regular course, as he had said, was to move first that the House do resolve itself into a committee of the whole House.

GRAND JURIES (IRELAND).] Mr. *Powell* begged to ask the noble Lord, the Secretary for Ireland, whether it were in the contemplation of Government to propose any measure for the reconstruction of the Irish Grand Jury Law, and also whether (as we understood) persons appointed in the interim would be so appointed with a full knowledge that their services might afterwards be dispensed with in the event of the existing offices being abolished.

Lord *Eliot* said, it was impossible for him to give a satisfactory answer to the former question, as her Majesty's Government were not yet in possession of the report of the commissioners who had been appointed to inquire into the subject. With respect to the second question, however, he could certainly inform the hon. Member that any person hereafter appointed to vacancies under the existing system would receive his appointment with a distinct understanding that he was liable to be called on to vacate it, should the Legislature decide on its abolition.

CORN-LAWS—MINISTERIAL PLAN—ADJOURNED PROCEEDINGS.] On the motion of Sir R. Peel, the Order of the

Day for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, on the Duties affecting the Importation of Foreign Corn, was read. On the question, that the Speaker do now leave the Chair,

Lord *J. Russell* rose and said,—Sir, I feel I should in no wise diminish the difficulties of the task I have undertaken, nor increase my own power of performing it, were I to commence the address which I have now to make, by any preface or apology. I shall, therefore, at once beg to call the attention of the House to the position in which we now stand. The question of the Corn-laws has been submitted to the House by the First Minister of the Crown for reconsideration; and he has not only done so on the authority of the Government to which he belongs, and over which he presides, but he has also informed us, that having collected opinions on the subject from those most interested in land, there are only a very few—only a very small proportion of that body—who object to some modification of the Corn-laws. We, therefore, now stand in the situation of considering the Corn-laws, with a view to their alteration, by almost general consent. The cry is no longer that of, " No surrender;" the question now is as to the terms of capitulation. Sir, if that be the case, if we are prepared to condemn the present Corn-laws as unfit to be longer continued on the statute-book, and if the House has now met for the purpose of legislating for the regulation of the trade in corn, then, I say, without fear of contradiction, that it is of the utmost importance, that you should make the change on sound principles; that you should endeavour to make it such as will give, as much as possible, general satisfaction, especially to that distressed portion of the community, of whose condition we have heard such lamentable accounts from both sides of the House; and, lastly, that it should be such a law as should not be liable to cause an immediate fresh agitation of the question, but that all who live under that law, all who have transactions in that most important of all articles of trade—the article of food, comprehending, in fact, in their various classes, the whole community, should be fully aware of the actual state of the law, under which they are to live, and be prepared to feel, that for some time it will not be disturbed. Because, Sir, though it may be wise to concede, yet, when we concede, we ought to look for the fruits of conciliation. It may be wise to disturb the law as it now exists, but when we make that disturbance of the law, we ought only to do so for the purpose of settling it afresh upon a better foundation: to concede, but not to conciliate, to disturb the existing state of things, and yet to settle nothing, would be, I conceive, of all courses that could possibly be pursued, either by the Government, or by Parliament, that which would be the most imprudent for a Government to propose, or for Parliament to adopt. I shall think it necessary, Sir, however I may be obliged to trespass on the indulgence of the House, in stating my reasons for opposing, at this early stage, the measures of her Majesty's Government, to present to the House, as briefly as I can, the general principles which ought to guide the Legislature in deciding on this subject, because, although in one part of the principles laid down by her Majesty's Government, I concur, yet there are other points, on which I entirely differ. I suppose it will be agreed, in the first place, that with respect to corn, as with respect to everything else, the general principle is that of not legislating at all on the subject. The general principle as to all commodities is, that the producer or the seller endeavours to produce or to bring to market that article, and in that shape, which will be most likely to find a ready and immediate purchaser. The general principle with regard to the purchaser, I apprehend in like manner, is that he will go where he expects to get the goods he wants the best in quality, and the cheapest in price. Therefore, speaking generally, legislation has no natural place in those matters. The community themselves, are far better judges on such subjects, than the wisest senate, that ever deliberated upon them. The community themselves, in regard to the several commodities choose those articles of which they stand in need, and also the place to which they will go in order to purchase them; and those who are looking to get a profit from the production of such articles can choose themselves the particular goods which they will produce, and to what market they shall take them. This, Sir, is a principle which is generally understood in the present day; but, unfortunately, like many other great and generally understood principles, it is one which is most exceedingly violated in practice. Now, there are, no doubt, limitations and exceptions to the application of that principle, and as to its application to the article of corn in particular, I should say there are two limitations and exceptions which I have had occasion to state myself at meetings in public, and in this House, and which have also been stated by great writers on the subject— exceptions on which, I think, reasonable allowances should always be made. In the first place, if you have unduly or disproportionately taxed one branch of industry, you should, if it be possible, make some equivalent in other arrangements for the unequal burden on that particular branch. With regard to general taxation, however, as Mr. Ricardo ably distinguished, however severe may be its pressure, you have no right, on that acccount, to tax the corn of foreign countries, because the people at large bear the burden of that general taxation. General taxation applies to the manufacturer, to all classes engaged in industry, as well as to agriculturists. But with regard to particular taxation — without entering into it, as I do not mean to enter into the question of what is, or what may be its amount—I think, if Parliament finds, that the landed interest, the farmers, and those who cultivate the land, are peculiarly taxed, it would be unjust, that they should bring their products to market, burdened with such peculiar taxation, and allow the merchant from foreign countries, to send in his corn not subject to similar burdens. That would be a violation, not of free-trade, but of every fair principle of trade, against your own people. There is another principle which is laid down by Dr. Adam Smith, and as the quotation is not long, it may be satisfactory to read it; though it applies to manufactures, it is also very applicable to the subject of corn. Dr. Smith says:—

> "The case in which it may sometimes be a matter of deliberation how far, or in what manner, it is proper to restore the free importation of foreign goods, after it has been for some time interrupted, is, when particular manufactures, by means of high duties or prohibitions upon all foreign goods which can come into competition with them, have been so far extended as to employ a great multitude of hands. Humanity may, in this case, require, that the freedom of trade should be restored only by slow gradations, and with a good deal of reserve and circumspection. Were those high duties and prohibitions taken away all at once, cheaper foreign goods, of the same kind, might be poured so fast into the home-market, as to deprive all at once, many thousands of our people of their ordinary employment and means of subsistence."

Such was the principle laid down by that high authority, and it is so reasonable in itself that I do not conceive much objection can be made to it. With respect to corn, if it has been the effect of your regulations to cause the cultivation of certain lands, and the employment of labour on them which ought not to have been so employed, then a change in those regulations should be gradual rather than sudden, and protection of some kind should be given to those of your own people who are so situated. I cannot now say what the limits of that protection should be; but if it be found, on discussing the subject in committee, that the undue burdens of the agriculturists are considerable, let the protection be made proportionate. If there are no such burdens, or if they be trifling, let the protecting duty be regulated accordingly. But the Government, in proposing the plan now before us, have laid down a principle which is far more doubtful—though it is a principle which has indeed been sanctioned by one great writer, I mean Mr. Malthus, and acted upon by the Legislature on former occasions—namely, that you ought to make this country independent of foreign nations. Tha- is the principle on which the existing law and the proposition of the right hon. Gentleman opposite are framed, and which tends to prevent, by prohibitory duties, other nations from sending food into this country. I confess that although that principle might be an excellent one for some remote and sequestered state, such as that city which is supposed to exist somewhere in Mexico, which is said to have no communication with the rest of mankind, I cannot conceive how it is applicable to this great commercial country. But, supposing it to be desirable, in what manner could you establish such independence? Recollect that, even with respect to corn, you are not now independent of foreign nations. The right hon. Gentleman stated the other night that for four years we had on an average imported 2,300,000 quarters of corn; that is to say, two millions of our people have been dependent on foreign countries for their annual supply of food. But with respect to other commodities likewise we are dependent. The employment and, therefore, the subsistence of those who are engaged in manufactures is as much dependent on the supply of the raw material from foreign countries, as on the supply of food itself. If the supply of cotton from America, or of foreign wool, or foreign silk, were entirely stopped, I believe I do not exaggerate in saying that not less than five millions of our people would be deprived of employment and the means of subsistence. There have been, therefore, for four years, under this law, which goes on the principle of making this country independent of other countries, seven millions of our people dependent upon foreigners. For that period, seven millions of our people, while we have been acting on the principle of preserving ourselves independent of foreign countries, have been fed by their means, and these people have existed in defiance and despite of that principle. May we not conclude therefore, that the very means by which you attempt to make this country independent of foreign supplies of food have failed, and necessarily must continue to fail. The consequence, indeed, as pointed out in a report of a committee of 1821, said to have been written by Mr. Huskisson, is, that while you raise the price of food in this country beyond the price of continental countries you do for a time give a stimulus to agriculture, but that stimulus in favourable seasons produces a glut, which it is impossible to remedy by disposing of the produce. In that way there was agricultural distress in those years to which the right hon. Gentleman referred as years during which the country completely fed itself. Those years you will find by the King's speeches, by the appointment of committees, and by speeches in this House, were years in which there was a constant complaint of agricultural distress, complaints which, I must say, it was natural to expect would have been made, because there was no outlet or vent for the surplus agricultural produce of those years, which had been forced into the market by the existing law. What followed? There was naturally a check to that production, and when you came to unfavourable seasons you then found that you had not the quantity of food necessary for your supply, and you were obliged to make large importations, so that your object has been entirely defeated. The very law you have made for your protection is of no use as a protection, and rather tends the other way, as it prevents you from enjoying that constant supply which, it is desirable to have in all years and in all seasons. The only ground I can conceive for entertaining such an object, would be the case of a war with a foreign country; and yet I cannot imagine a war, by which we should be placed in a position of greater danger than that which we occupied when this country was struggling against Napoleon. But what was the fact? No less than 2,000,000 quarters of corn were imported into this country in a single year of that war, the year 1810. That importation was gradually diminished in subsequent years, but still the fact remains, that in that dreadful war this country existed for some time by means of the foreign supply, and not by means of its being excluded. Is there any chance —is there any probability—that you would have a greater danger from continental war than that which you then had? If you had, resting as you do on commerce, resting as you do on manufactures, I think you would not incur much danger, because I cannot conceive there would not be some part of the world from which you might draw your supplies. Therefore, I should say, the remedy should be quite the reverse of that which has been proposed to the House. The remedy proposed to the House, as it was stated in the right hon. Gentleman's argument, is to endeavour, as much as possible, to protect your native farmers, and to make such a law that you will never have any supply except from the northern ports of Europe. The right hon. Gentleman in his argument said, that we should have corn from countries nearly in the same latitude, that their seasons would nearly resemble our own, and, therefore, when they had abundance we should have abundance, when they had scarcity we should have scarcity. But all that argument went on the supposition that we are to make a law such as the present law, which confines the supply of foreign corn to particular times and particular countries, which does not seek a remedy for existing evils by laying open the market of England at all times and to all the world. That is your true resource. Not to restrict or stint the supply—not to endeavour to confine yourself to the production of one country; but to have corn not only from the countries of Northern Europe, but from the Black Sea and from America. Let your commerce in grain, like all your commerce, stretch its arms over the whole world, and then rely freely and entirely on the operation of that commerce for those supplies of food of which you so greatly stand in need. Sir, the proposal made to the House by the resolution of the right hon. Baronet maintains the principle of a sliding scale and the principle of a high duty. In opposing the sliding scale, the first objection I take to it is that a high prohibitory duty always forms part of the scale. I could understand a scale of which the highest term was ten or twelve shillings, and which then descended to 4*s*., 2*s*., or 1s.; but I find that whenever the right hon. Gentleman or others speak of a sliding scale, it always includes a prohibitory duty. Let us see what is the first duty of his scale:—the first duty is, when the price of corn is under 51s., a duty of 20*s*. I wish to show that that duty is prohibitory. I have looked over the papers which contain the latest information. I mean those presented by the right hon. Gentleman, the Vice-president of the Board of Trade. In those papers we have, first, the consuls' returns, made up from papers presented to Parliament last year. We have next the result of inquiries made, by direction of the present Government, by a gentleman who was sent expressly for the purpose to the north of Europe. He seems to have had communication not only with official persons, but with several merchants on whom, he states, he could entirely depend. I must own I was surprised, that in the course of the right hon. Gentleman's speech, that having collected this information, he did not make any use of it for his argument; but when I came to look at the papers myself, my surprise altogether ceased, and I only found in the silence of the right hon. Gentleman another proof of his discretion. I find, in the consular return, the price of Dantzic wheat, stated at 40*s*. free on board; that the freight in Dantzic was from 3*s*. 6*d*. to 4*s*.; and it appears again, in the information collected by Mr. Meek, that the price at Dantzic was from 40*s*. to 45*s*., free on board. There are charges which they say must necessarily be incurred, and as to which, of course, I need not go into detail, but which I could satisfy any Gentleman would be from 4*s*. 6*d*. to 5*s*., making in all 10*s* 6*d*. to be added to the original price; that is to say, the original price at Dantzic, when brought from the interior of the country being 35*s*., they say that with the addition of 10*s*. 6*d*. the corn would be sold in England. That would be making the price 45*s*. 6*d*. in ordinary years. Add to that 20*s*., it would make it 65*s*. 6*d*. when the price here is 50*s*.; which, of course, is a prohibitory duty. In the same way at Odessa, it is stated in the corn returns that the price would be 26*s*., and the freight 10*s*. Of course you must add to that sum further charges, which I think you could not take at less than 5*s*., and then the price will also be 61*s*. without the profit of the merchants. Therefore, with respect to these lower sums, although we say there shall be a duty of 20*s*., and a duty of 19*s*., and at 53*s*. there shall be a duty of 18*s*., yet, in all these instances, it is perfectly clear that the duty would be necessarily prohibitory; that when the prices ranged at 55*s*. and 56*s*.—the price at which the right hon. Gentleman says he is pleased to see corn—that when that chosen price (nobody can tell why) should prevail, there would then be a prohibitory duty on foreign corn. The right hon. Gentleman says, and says most truly, I think, that 20*s*. is quite sufficient, and no doubt he is perfectly right. The duties in the present law of 45*s*. and 47*s*. when corn is 39*s*., are, as the right hon. Gentleman says, so much odium unnecessarily incurred. I quite agree in that, and I think it would have been far better in 1828, to have said, with the right hon. Gentleman, "20*s*. duty will exclude foreign corn, and you don't want to carry anything stronger than will keep corn out. You have no need to put on iron plates and additional locks if the door which I gave you be strong enough to close the entrance." If such a proposition had been adopted, it would then have made the law a little more plausible; but I hope we are come to a period when the question is of some greater change than one which would make the law look a little less exclusive, and appear less odious to the country, without giving any real relaxation. I have mentioned the prices at Dantzic and Odessa. I have seen it stated by a gentleman, who from his speeches at Anti-Corn-law meetings, appears to be well informed with respect to America, that the price of corn from America in Liverpool would average 43*s*. to 47*s*., which (taking 45*s*. as the average), with the 20*s.* duty, would be 65*s.*; therefore, with respect to American, as well as all other corn, that duty would be prohibitory. It is not possible for me to say, although I have endeavoured to ascertain, at what price the duty would cease to be prohibitory. There is in the scheme proposed the double advantage to the merchant, which the Government still retain, that if the price increases, and the merchant gets a better price, the duty falls. According to the statement I have made, I do not think corn could be imported at the present price, which is about 61*s.* It appears to me that this corn, which would be 45*s.* at Dantzic, with the profit that is required by the increased price, would hardly be sold at the present price of corn — 61*s.*; perhaps at some price about 62*s.*, and from 62*s.* of course at all higher prices the merchant will import it; but if he is told that after incurring great expense — that after making himself liable to large sums of money, in order to bring an article from foreign countries, he may find, that when he has brought it to this country, a prohibitory duty will stare him in the face, and prevent him from taking the article out of the warehouses, there arises an insuperable objection to the trade which he has undertaken. Such is the impediment actually existing. Therefore it is that the sliding scale, containing a prohibitory duty, is in the first place, and in its nature, essentially inimical to trade. It seems too, that when you do admit foreign corn, there is an unnecessary advantage given. Suppose it comes in at 62*s.*, that price enables the merchant to pay 11*s.* duty; when the price is 65*s.* the duty is 8*s.*; and you give him a bonus equal to the difference, where there is no advantage to the public. He gains by higher price; why shonld he likewise gain by lower duty? What has been the consequence of the fluctuating duty during the last year? It has been very well stated in two pamphlets written on the subject by Mr. Hubbard and Mr. Greg. One shows that on the 5th July last, the price of Dantzic corn in bond was 48*s.* It might have been admitted and sold at 56*s.* with an 8*s.* duty. It was not admitted, and on the 5th of August, the price had risen to 60*s.* a quarter. You still did not admit it; your law gave the speculator reason to believe that he could obtain a better price: and in two months, that is in the beginning of September, the same corn was sold for 70*s.* a quarter, being an addition of 22*s.* a quarter to the price, without the slightest benefit to the farmer or landowner, and with no advantage but to the foreign speculator. Such, then, I say, is the effect of your law. You lower your duties for the purpose of admitting foreign corn at a high price, with very little advantage to the revenue, and none at all to the consumer or producer of corn in this country. If you had had a low fixed duty you might have secured an advantage both to the revenue and the consumer. Mr. Greg states —but I think his calculation exaggerated—that the money uselessly paid to the holders of foreign corn, for 10,000,000 quarters, amounted to not less than 6,000,000*l.* I think that an over-estimate, but I think that not less than three or four millions have been unnecessarily paid, in order to obtain the benefits of the sliding scale—a sum entirely lost to the public for the sake of that inimitable invention. I have received to day a statement, which discloses another evil in the sliding scale. You say you will take the price according to averages, as before. The right hon. Gentleman says, I do not say whether wisely or not, that he does not propose to alter the system of averages, but they are to be taken much in the same way as heretofore, and therefore liable to the same faults. Now, take the averages as you may, there is a defect inherent in them. They do not tell you the quality of the corn. During the present year, it happened that a great portion of the corn was much damaged. Some persons, well acquainted with agriculture, thought, that one-fifth of the whole crop was damaged, be that as it may, there was a great diminution in the average price of corn. But did the people get their bread cheaper? No, the apparent cheapness was not cheapness to the consumer, for he paid as much for his bread as when the averages were higher. This has been made out clearly by a gentleman who has sent me the figures. He shows, that in January, 1841, the average price of wheat was 61*s.* 2*d.* In 1842, it was likewise 61*s.* 2*d.* You would, therefore, say that, with precisely the same average and the same duty, the people obtained their bread at the same price. Far from it. The price of the best town-made flour, according to the Mark-lane returns, during the first four weeks of 1841, was 55*s.* per sack, and during the first four weeks of 1842 61*s.* per sack—making a difference of no less than 6*s.* in the sack of flour from which bread is made; while the averages have not altered a jot, nor the duty varied a shilling. That is a defect which you cannot get rid of by changing the system of averages twenty times over, nor by introducing 150 more towns than are now proposed to be introduced. It is a fault which, by keeping up a high duty, makes the labourer of this country pay a high price for his bread, and excludes foreign corn upon a false assumption, that the price of corn in the English market is lower than it really is. There is another defect which is likewise inherent in this scale, or in any scale, that it compels you to seek foreign corn at particular times, and when you are unable to pay for it with other articles in the regular way of trade. You have a prohibitory duty for two or three years, and then just after a harvest —the price rising in August, and the averages getting up—you find that a large supply will be required. The price rose rapidly, as I have shown you in one case, 22*s.* a quarter in two months. Many millions must be paid, and you have no means of meeting that demand by sending out goods, because you have no regular trade. You are obliged to send gold from your stock of bullion to pay for the corn. The Bank of England then naturally and inevitably contracts its issues. If it did not, its notes would come back, requiring more gold. That contraction is made at a time when the commercial world is in a state of embarrassment—when manufacturers ought to be enabled to give employment to the artizans, and when those artizans are paying a higher price for the articles of subsistence. That cannot be wholly prevented by the freest system in the world. If you were getting supplies from all quarters of the world, it would not prevent variations in price—it would not prevent corn being much dearer in some seasons than others. I admit that. I do not tell you that you can always have a perfectly steady price of corn; but I do say, and I do ask of you—if there be difficulties which nature has placed in our way—that you will not exaggerate those difficulties by bad legislation. Do not you heap embarrassment upon embarrassment; do not put difficulty upon difficulty. That, at least I think, should not be the object of your legislation. The general welfare that ought to be sought for is totally incompatible with prohibition at one moment, and free admission at another. Next, with respect to fraud, in making up the averages, I cannot think with the right hon. Gentleman that it is of little consequence, or that there have not been very serious frauds at particular times, and that there will not be very serious frauds even still, under his scale of duties. Put it as you may, a rise of price is accompanied by a lowering of the duty, and as long as that continues, you must look for the consequences of that temptation which you offer, and that every one knows has been acted upon. In the year 1820, I think a committee of this House investigated and exposed the frauds committed with respect to the averages. That committee devised, as they conceived, a remedy for this fraud. You find the same frauds, however, were committed last year. In the years 1838 and 1839, frauds existed, and an instance of this was, that in one market the price of corn differed to the extent of nine shillings in a single week. That, at least, it must be admitted, is a bad system of law which gives encouragement to fraud and to gambling speculations; and that, too, where you ought to have an honest and a wholesome trade. But, if I were to state all the defects of the sliding scale—and there are many more still behind, it would occupy too much time, I come, therefore, to that which is the most serious of all, namely, that it confines the supply of this country with corn to the north of Europe. You have a deficient harvest, there is then a high price for corn, and you are obliged to send, as you did last year, orders for corn to be shipped at Dantzic, and to be shipped at all the ports in the Baltic. They take advantage of the low duty, their corn comes in, and you have to remain satisfied with this supply, which is only given to you at a high price. But, then, suppose a merchant were to say, the price of corn is now high—the duty is low—I know markets in North America in which there is an abundant supply of corn, and from which the corn can be shipped here. But if the merchant does send his orders, by the time the cargo arrives the prohibitory duties stand in his way—the price has fallen—the duty is high; and then, perhaps, he finds that for two or three years his cargo remains on his hands, and he is a loser by the transaction. That is a defect which must be in any law which does not permit you to go to all the markets that will deal with you; and, above all, that will not permit you to go to such a country as the United States of America. In the present state of this country, as regards its commerce and general resources, there is nothing which ought to be considered as of more importance than retaining, extending, and improving our business and connexion with the advantages which the American markets hold out to us, and more especially those which are offered by our trade with the United States and the Brazils. It is most important for you to look to this; for a great portion of your exports of manufactured goods are sent to those markets. It would be no difficult matter by adopting a proper rule—the known rule of common sense—to retain, improve, and enlarge, to an almost indefinite extent, the trade you already carry on with those countries. But no, says the Legislature; we will not avail ourselves of these large outlets for our commerce; we will continue to tie ourselves down by restrictions; we will again shut the door upon the American markets; we will again refuse to receive her produce in return for our manufactures. I have got here a statement which I have taken from Mr. Buckingham's work on America. It gives an extract from a report of one of the States of the Union—that of New York—with regard to the extent of territory, and the produce from it in that country, which I hope the House will excuse me for reading, because it is of so much importance:—

> "The western termination of the Erie canal looks out upon Lake Erie, the most southerly and central of that great chain of navigable lakes, which stretches far into the interior from our western boundary. Around these inland seas a cluster of five great states is rapidly rising. The territory which they comprise, and which is to become tributary to the canal, embraces that great area, extending from the lakes on the north to the Ohio on the south, and from the western confines of this state to the upper Mississippi, containing 280,000 square miles. To measure its extent by well-known objects, it is fifteen times as large as that part of the state of New York, west of the county of Oneida—nearly twice as large as the kingdom of France—and about six times as extensive as the whole of England. It contains 180,000,000 of acres of arable land, a large portion of which is of surpassing fertility. In the brief period of twenty-one years, such has been the influx of population into this great district, that Ohio, the eldest member in this brotherhood of nations, now numbers 1,400,000 inhabitants, Indiana upwards of 600,000, Illinois and Michigan (both of whom have organized their governments and come into the Union), 700,000; while west of Lake Michigan, not only is Wisconsin rapidly rising, but even beyond the upper Mississippi, 30,000 citizens have already laid the foundations of yet another state. Such is the onward march of this population, that the amount of its annual increase alone exceeds in number the white inhabitants of ten of the states in the Union. The population already embraced within the district in question falls short of three millions, and if the same rate of progress shall be maintained for the twelve years next to come, by 1850 it will exceed six millions."

There, then, you have a great population with whom you might carry on a most profitable trade. You have them placed in a fertile district, and yet removed at such a distance from this country, that, as it was stated by Mr. Curtis, from 43s. to 47s. the quarter must be the price of the wheat sent from there at Liverpool without a duty. They could not then be such competitors that the English farmers should fear to meet them, and yet they could become great consumers of your manufactures. I cannot but believe that six millions of people inhabiting that fertile district would prefer the continuance of agriculture rather than abandon such an occupation to devote themselves to manufacture. They would be glad to receive your manufactures in exchange for the food which they sent you. However rising may be the manufactures of the United States, there is not enough of that species of industry, and probably there will not be for a long while to furnish this great population. It is not possible to say how long you might continue to furnish them with manufactured goods, and you might, it is apparent, carry on with them a commerce of the most extensive, of the most useful kind. Doing this, you would be feeding your own people, and giving them employment. Doing this, you might see in future years those who are now in that horrible state of destitution which has been described, comfortable and independent, living on the fruits of their labour, and consuming the produce of a distant country. Sir, where are those who would say, because we have the power of legislation in our hands, to stop this trade, we will forbid this mighty augmentation of human wealth and human happiness, and because we have the power we will undertake to place a barrier against it. Such, however, Sir, would be the effect of your continuance of the sliding scale. So long as the merchant has the fear before him that he will be unable to part with the produce he receives, he will be unwilling to enter into speculation, he will consider it a gambling and speculative trade which it would be better not to interfere in. You have a contrivance even now for augmenting these difficulties, but I am glad to find the right hon. Gentleman hesitates as to whether he shall finally impose the additional obstacle—you have a contrivance even now for putting obstacles upon the importation of corn into this country, by a fixed duty upon all the flour which would come from these western states by the canals and the St. Lawrence. Sir, I trust the right hon. Gentleman, having hesitated, will give up that part of his scheme. But, even without that additional obstacle, is it not a most monstrous and unwise legislation, that as regards the corn trade, we are not to legislate for all countries equally,and that the inhabitants of the Black Sea and of America are not equally free to send their produce as the other parts of the world? Observe, too, that the objection does not apply to America which was made by the right hon. Gentleman in bringing forward his propositions to a dependence in foreign countries. Observe, that if you have a trade in corn with America, it is not like the countries from which we may now expect a supply nearly in the same latitude, and subject to the same climate as our own. In a corn country, extending from thirty-six to forty-three degrees north latitude, it often happens, and I believe it did happen last year, that while there was a wet summer here, and the harvest had been much injured, there was great dryness in that portion of the globe. You have before you a choice of different climates, and you have but to say the word—you have but to reject the plan of the Government, and adopt one more consistent with the maxims of trade, and the wants of a great commercial country, and more consistent too with the deductions of science and the lessons of experience—one more in accordance with the prayers and petitions of a suffering people—you have but to say this, and the ports of the world will be opened to you, and you need not fear either the frequent recurrence of scarcity, or the interruptions to your trade, by foreign nations. Depend upon it, Sir, if you have free and universal commerce, protected by your great and formidable navy (and your navy always must be formidable), and if you have these two elements you need not have the smallest fear for your independence. Opposed as I am to the plan of the sliding scale, I shall, if that plan is rejected, be ready to enter into discussion with those who are opposed to any duty at all. What I propose is this, if the plan of a sliding scale is rejected—if it be found that there are no exclusive burdens borne by the agriculturists, then, I say, make only a provision for the maintenance of a duty, to prevent a sudden change, which might be so injurious to the agriculturists as to cause them to fall into distress. But if, as I believe, there are peculiar burdens borne by the agriculturists, then I propose that there be a low duty, a moderate duty, in consideration of their peculiar burdens. I would have the duty equal to these burdens, but to rise anything beyond that, not to say a shilling, but a single farthing beyond that, would be absolutely unjust and injurious. The right hon. Gentleman has said, that a great advantage in argument enjoyed by those persons who support the free admission of corn, and who declare they will have no restrictions upon trade, no protection which can impede it. Not only do they enjoy an advantage but they are invincible, unless you can show good and sufficient reasons for the duty that you impose. For a small fixed duty I think such reasons could be given; but if you have a prohibition through the instrumentality of a sliding scale, then, I think, you cannot possibly give any such reasons. It must be said in favour of a fixed duty, that it has been recommended at different times by persons of great authority. It was first recommended by Mr. Malthus, in 1815, when the Corn-law was proposed. Mr. Ricardo proposed that after a certain time a 10*s*. duty should be imposed. He proposed that the duty should be 20*s*. and then fall 1*s*. a-year until it descended to 10*s*., and there to remain. Mr. M'Culloch maintains, that, instead of 10*s*. the burthens of the agriculturist would be fully protected by a 5*s*. duty. A committee of this House in 1821, which was composed of many eminent agriculturists, and amongst others the right hon. the Paymaster of the Forces (Sir E. Knatchbull) and of which Sir Thomas Gooch was chairman, recommended a fixed duty. They thought the best course, it would seem, was to impose a moderate fixed duty.

Sir *E. Knatchbull* was understood to say he never sanctioned such a recommendation.

Lord *J. Russell:* Does the right hon. Gentleman dispute the statement? I refer him to the recommendation of the committee itself. It begins by expressing its opinions with respect to a fixed duty with great modesty and diffidence, which, there is no doubt was perfectly proper, considering the persons to whom it was submitted were agriculturists. It says this—

> "Your committee may entertain a doubt (a doubt however, which they wish to state with that diffidence which a subject so extensive naturally imposes upon their judgment) whether the only solid foundation of the flourishing state of agriculture is not laid in abstaining as much as possible, from interference, either by protection or prohibition, with the application of capital in any branch of industry."

It then goes on to state why, with a reasonable duty, agriculture might flourish—

> "Assuming, therefore, that under present circumstances, Parliament would not now deem it expedient to abandon entirely the principle of the existing law, your committee have anxiously directed their attention to the possibility of, in some degree, modifying its operation, so as to remedy that inconvenience to which they have more particularly referred in the earlier part of their report, which consists in the sudden and irregular manner in which, in many cases, foreign corn may be introduced upon the opening of the ports, under circumstances inconsistent with the spirit and intention of the law. They conceive that this object might be attained by the imposition of a fixed duty upon corn, whenever, upon the opening of the ports, it should become admissible for home consumption."

Permit me now to observe, that although that committee recommended a fixed duty, still I cannot but think that the parties who wrote this, looked forward to the time when there should be a free trade in corn, and rather thought that the fixed duty would be a temporary measure—that a future period might be reckoned upon, in which all protecting and prohibitory duties would be at an end. Of course, Mr. Huskisson was a party to the present measure. He was a party to the bill of 1827; he was a party to the bill of 1828; but in 1830, the last time he spoke on this subject, although he did not maintain a fixed duty, yet he supported that principle, which from time to time he supported, when he considered it advisable or thought it prudent—I mean the principle of free trade. I have stated that I am ready to consider the propriety of a fixed duty. I think there are various points connected with a fixed duty, and that not only as to its amount, which are matters for grave consideration. I was taunted for saying that I thought that one of the best courses to pursue with a fixed duty, in times of scarcity, was to leave to the Crown the power of opening the ports a certain time before the assembling of Parliament. I think, perhaps, it would be better that when the price of corn rose to a certain point—when the price averaged from 73*s.* to 74*s.*, that then there should be a 1*s.* duty. I state that as a matter for consideration. I proposed before that, in cases of scarcity, there should be a discretionary power in the Crown; or say, as an alternative, that should the price be very high, then there should be a nominal duty, or the duty should cease. But among other objections, the right hon. Gentleman stated to us, the other night, that when you had corn cheap here, it would be in such abundance in foreign countries, that if the foreign corn came in competition with the produce of the English agriculturists, they would be ruined by it; while, if corn is very dear, you cannot keep a fixed duty. Now, with respect to the farmer—as to the cheapness of corn abroad, you do not find it at a less price than 26*s.* at Dantzic. You have to add the cost of importation, and then, if there be a moderate duty, you will find it at a price which exceeds the lowest price of corn here since 1831. Then with respect to dear years, what is it you do? You give an advantage rather to the foreign merchant than the English agriculturist. And you must consider, that by the maintenance of a fixed duty, you prevent corn from rising here to a very high price, or, if it did do so, if it were desirable to relax the amount of that duty, it might be done either by the authority of the Executive, or the authority of Parliament. As I originally proposed, it should be by the authority of the Executive. That which I think most essential is, that there should be a constant trade; that there never should be a duty which should shut out corn at a certain price, and let it in more easily at another; that on certain occasions it should not produce frauds, nor encourage gambling speculations, nor continue the same evils, the fruits of the existing system, and to be continued by the present scale proposed by the Government. There is another part of the subject to which I have not adverted, and upon which the right hon. Gentleman in his address to the House dwelt but very slightly—I mean that painful portion of the subject which relates to the great distress so extensively prevailing in certain quarters of the country. That that distress exists to a great extent—that it exists in Leeds, in Manchester, in a great portion of the cotton districts, and in some parts of Scotland, is now by no person denied. It was stated in the strongest terms by the hon. Member who seconded the Address. The right hon. Gentleman says, that he does not propose his plan for an alteration of the Corn-laws as any remedy for this distress, nor does he think that the Corn-laws, as they at present exist, are at all answerable for it. Now, Sir, I certainly shall not say, that they are the cause of the whole of this distress, but I think they tend very considerably to aggravate it. I think, moreover, that a considerable relaxation of your Corn-laws will tend greatly, though not, perhaps, immediately, to mitigate the distress. What is now said by persons who are conversant with the cotton trade residing in Manchester? In a circular which they have addressed to the wholesale houses of London, they state, that while the foreign exports, profitable or not, have increased during the past year, the sale of their goods for domestic use has decreased 3,000 bales a week. They draw a conclusion which I think is very natural, and borne out by all the other evidence on the subject—that the want of means in the labouring classes to purchase clothing and other articles, as well as food, has been the cause of that diminished consumption; that a much greater part of the earnings of the labouring classes than hitherto has during the last two or three years been applied to the purchase of food. This statement is supported by all who have had communication with the labouring classes, and indeed by their own declarations in various parts of the country. I presented a petition to-night, in which the petitioners affirm, that they now pay much more than formerly for their bread, that they are not able to consume sugar at all, and that with respect to other articles their consumption has greatly diminished. Well, then, if you had a freer admission of foreign corn one consequence which would follow would be, that those great and numerous classes, being able to purchase their food at a cheaper rate would be able to consume a greater quantity of manufactured articles. Another consequence would be, that the manufacturers would find a better market for their goods, and send those goods abroad in exchange for the food sent to this country, Therefore, while I do not say, that the whole distress of the country is caused by the Corn-laws, or that it would be immediately removed were those laws totally repealed, this I do say, that I think those laws have tended to aggravate the distress, and that you would mitigate it by relaxation of them. It appears to me, Sir, that the situation in which the country is now placed, is different from that in which the right hon. Baronet supposes it to stand. He considers the position of its commercial affairs to be similar to that which has already occurred at various periods, when there has been much distress in the manufacturing districts, produced by different causes,—as over-production, increase of machinery, and in the establishment of joint-stock banks, which have always ended by a reduction of the excess of those establishments, and a restoration of the former state of things. Now, Sir, that is not, according to my belief, a true view of the state of the country. I believe, that although the number of joint-stock banks and the production of manufactured goods may have been somewhat in excess, yet, if there had been no other cause in operation, the distress would have passed by, and the evil would already have been corrected. And let it be observed, that the evil is stated by the right hon. Gentleman in a manner that is inconsistent and contradictory. One part of that evil, he says, is the building of so many houses, and the bringing a new and increased population into the manufacturing towns. Another part, according to him, is that machinery diminishes employment. There may be some truth in the first branch of the statement, but with respect to the increase of machinery diminishing employment, our whole history, since the introduction of manufactures into England, contradicts that supposition. Wherever manufactures have been established, whereever new machinery has been invented, wherever means have been found of lessening the quantity of human labour requisite to produce a particular article, it has always ensued that markets have been created or have been extended, and thereby the whole number of persons employed has been increased instead of being diminished. And, indeed, had it not been so, what could have called into existence those great towns of Manchester, Leeds, Glasgow, and Birmingham, growing from year to year, in proportion as the ingenuity of our countrymen has added new processes for the abridgment of labour to those which were before known? If the establishment of machinery had diminished the field of employment, the progress would have been the other way. Those great cities would have become smaller and smaller, and the machinery, almost without the employment of human hands, would have furnished sufficient produce for the consumption of the whole country.

Sir *R. Peel* was understood to say, across the Table, that he had not maintained that machinery decreased employment.

Lord *John Russell*: I certainly understood, and I was very sorry to hear it, that the right hon. Baronet in some degree assented to a doctrine which I think very erroneous, but that has been held in some quarters where it was said great support was to be given to the Government—that the increase of manufactures and the power of machinery diminished employment. I believe, on the contrary, that if we pursue a wise policy, we may look forward to a still further increase of our manufactures. I believe we have not yet reached the point to which our manufactures and our commerce may attain, if we do but add to their freedom instead of imposing new restrictions. The people think that some relief may be obtained by a change in those laws, and by a freer admission of corn. If you are not prepared to grant that total repeal which the great majority of those petitioners ask for, I should advise you, at all events, to make a considerable step in that direction. I should advise you to show, by some material advance, that you wish to meet their wishes as far as you think consistent with their interests, and that this House has a sympathy with the sufferers who are now petitioning you for relief. But the right hon. Baronet says, that the Corn-laws have not produced the distress, and that an alteration of those laws will not relieve it. Why, Sir, I agree to that description, when it is made applicable to the measures proposed by the Government. I agree that it is impossible to hope that any material alleviation of distress should result from a measure which is only made to look apparently a little better than the former one, which keeps up all the vicious principles of the old law, which forbids the import of corn by a prohibitory duty, which encourages speculation, which cramps your commerce, and prevents your resorting for food to the Black Sea and the United States. To such a measure, the description that it will do nothing to relieve the distress is strictly applicable. Do whatever you may, this let me advise you—not to agree to such a measure as this. If you think that the present Corn-laws are framed on sound principles, and that they tend to the prosperity of the country, do not mind some of the minor defects, but stand upon them as a good and useful system. Do not innovate, except you innovate for some wise and beneficial end. Lord Bacon said, with a wisdom which has been often admired, that the froward retention of custom is as turbulent a thing as innovation. But he never dreamt that there might be a measure which should have all the evils of a froward retention of custom, and yet contain within it all the mischiefs of innovation—a measure which should change and therefore disturb, but which should not improve, and therefore not alleviate distress—a measure which, having caused much speculation, and excited great hopes for a long period, should be in appearance a change, and yet in reality be founded on the same principles, and produce similar evils, with that which has been condemned by the public voice. Such a measure I consider is that which is now proposed. I cannot conceive that you will legislate to any purpose unless you in the first place reject that measure. If you reject it, you may hereafter consider to how great an extent you may set free the trade in food—you may consider how far you may concede to the wishes of the petitioners. It will be open to you to give due weight to every view of the subject that may be presented, to consider the interests of the agriculturists, the quantity of land that has been brought into cultivation, the peculiar burdens that affect agriculture. If it be true, as the right hon. Baronet says, that there is as much odium attached to a fixed duty as to a sliding scale, and if there be any odium in imposing such a duty as is fair to the agricultural part of the community, from that odium I am not disposed to shrink, for I will rather incur any odium than not do justice to the agricultural as well as the manufacturing classes. But if you adopt the scheme now proposed to you, do not think—although among a people who have attained that degree of civilization to which the people of England have now arrived, I do not believe you will have those scenes of tumult which occurred in a former century, and even in the year 1815—but do not think that you will not call up a formidable spirit of discontent, a dangerous spirit of disaffection to the constituted authorities of the realm. They will not be satisfied with being told that you gave undue favour to no particular class, that you did not enact this law for a class, but on a well-considered view of the interests of the whole community. It cannot fail to strike them, that speculative and abstract writers, that commercial men, that indifferent spectators have all agreed that a sliding scale is the worst basis upon which you can construct a Corn-law. They cannot fail to perceive, that what you propose is condemned generally by the persons and classes who are most impartial and best informed. How then shall they believe that the proprietors of the land alone take an impartial view of this question? How shall they think, that the very class who have a pecuniary interest in it are, contrary to the experience of all mankind, the only persons who on the present occasion take a disinterested and impartial view? Depend upon it they will not so reason; they will attribute, unjustly, perhaps, but they will attribute to you a bias in favour of those interests which are favoured, of those persons who the noble Lord, the Secretary for the Colonies, is reported to have declared enjoy an increase of income, an increase of rent, by the maintenance of the present system. They will believe that those interests have not been indifferent to you, and that you have taken a partial and not a dispassionate view of the interests of the whole community. Anything, Sir, will be better for the Legislature than this. Be in error if you will. Enact laws which partake of the ignorance of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries upon matters of trade; if it is mere ignorance, you will excite no feelings of hostility by such a course. But if you allow it to be proclaimed, that the Commons of England have acted on this question, which concerns the food of the whole community, with a selfish end, it is impossible but that the Legislature must suffer in estimation. Such, Sir, being the light in which I see the present proposition, I only hope that you will come to such a decision as will show that you have large and enlightened intentions with respect to the present state of trade and commerce, that you have considered agriculture as well as all other interests, and that you have determined to pass a law which men will regard as a blessing to the community, and for which they will thank you in the gratitude and fervour of their hearts as a wise and beneficent Legislature. That such may be your decision is my most anxious prayer, and I cannot think that you can legislate thus unless the present measure is rejected, and you proceed upon totally different foundations. I have now to move,

> "That this House, considering the evils which have been caused by the present Corn-laws, and especially by the fluctuations of the graduated or sliding scale, is not prepared to adopt the measure of her Majesty's Government, which is founded upon the same principles, and is likely to be attended by similar results."

Mr. *Gladstone* said, while he endeavoured, with the profoundest respect for the talent and station of the noble Lord, to discharge his duty in following him in this debate, and urging on the House the rejection of the motion which the noble Lord had made, his first object should be to disembarrass this question of all topics which did not belong to the immediate issue before the House, and to remind them on what ground it was that Gentlemen on his side of the House were in conflict with that of the noble Lord. The noble Lord had concluded his speech by a representation of the sinister impressions which would be entertained throughout the country, if that House should accept the measure tendered by her Majesty's Government. And the noble Lord apparently grounded his anticipations on the feelings so strongly manifested in many parts of the country with reference to the present Corn-law. But the noble Lord, as the advocate of a fixed duty on corn, had no right to take advantage of that feeling, with the view of throwing disparagement on the plan of her Majesty's Government in comparison with his own, or for the purpose of assuming, that in case he should succeed in inducing the House to reject the proposition of his right hon. Friend, the adverse sentiments which it had called forth would be at all mitigated, or that the agitation which had lately been excited would be allayed. The noble Lord had not scrupled to come forward as the advocate of protection by the Legislature. The noble Lord declared that it would be unjust at the present moment to enact a free trade in corn. The noble Lord had given two grounds for that opinion, and it seemed to him, if the noble Lord acted consistently with the reasons he had himself alleged, he ought to accept the measure which had been tendered by her Majesty's Government. The noble Lord said, and in this he differed from a large number of those who were his ostensible supporters, that there were special burdens which exclusively affected agriculture, and in consequence of which, according to the measure of the strictest equity a certain amount of taxation ought to be imposed on the food of the people. But the noble Lord did not stop there, he took another, a distinct, and in his opinion, a most valid ground for the imposition of a duty on the importation of foreign corn; for the noble Lord stated that during a long series of years—he might have said for many centuries—the Legislature had maintained a system differing in the form and the amount of protection, but always imposing some duty on the importation of foreign corn; that upon the faith of this restrictive system an enormous capital had been invested; that under this investment millions of the population had been employed; and the noble Lord justly held that to destroy in a moment the foundation on which such a superstructure had been raised, to create an agricultural panic, and to displace from their present employment large numbers of the agricultural population, would be a step so disastrous and so disgraceful, that no British Legislature should be induced to entertain it. The noble Lord then, as well as those on his side of the House, was obnoxious to the clamour of those who contended, with a conference held upon the subject of the Corn-laws, that

> "The free importation of corn was not a subject for the deliberation of the senate, but a natural and inalienable law of the Creator."

And the noble Lord was amenable to the further censure (joined in by many of those to whom he looked for the support of his motion that night)

> "That they who interfered with the exchange of the produce of labour for the food of other countries, impiously obstructed those advantages of commercial intercourse vouchsafed for the benefit of all nations."

Now, the real question was not which side of the House could enlist in support of its arguments the greatest array of prejudice and passion. If that were so, there were passions and prejudices enough to which an appeal might be made on either side; but the question was, looking to the constitutionally represented sense of the people—looking to the course of legislation which had been always pursued on this subject—looking to the burdens which the noble Lord affirmed, and he (Mr. Gladstone) believed justly, were laid exclusively on agriculture; looking to all the circumstances of the case, and searching for that which was most practicable and best under all the considerations to which any man desiring to be really useful to his country must direct his regards; whether, on a review of all these points, it was best to accede to the scale of duties proposed by his right hon. Friend, or to adopt the proposition which had just been made, and which, in substance at least, was similar to that last year submitted by the noble Lord.

There was, indeed, one ground for the protection of agriculture which the noble Lord disavowed, and that was, an intention on the part of the Legislature to make this country independent of foreign supply. The noble Lord asserted that a great writer and authority, Mr. Malthus, was in favour of the principle of independence of foreign supply. With respect to this topic, and without discussing its abstract validity, he was surprised that the noble Lord, when referring to authorities, did not bear in mind a far higher name, or that, if he recollected, he did not quote the sanction of Mr. Huskisson, who had held that, not indeed to all extremities and for all circumstances, but within moderate bounds, it was a legitimate design for Parliament to pursue, to render the country independent of foreign supply. Mr. Huskisson strongly supported this proposition in 1815. It was true, that at a subsequent period he modified some of the opinions which he then expressed; but the question arose was this opinion amongst those upon which his judgment was altered? In 1827, six years after the publication of that report which the noble Lord had made the subject of such high, and he must add in his humble judgment such just commendation, when on some occasion the question before the House turned upon the independence of foreign supply, he declared in his place in Parliament that he adhered unequivocally and unreservedly to the opinion which he had announced in 1815.

He would now contend, with respect to the general subject of debate, that the evils attributed to the existing law were only owing to it in a limited degree, and that the statements made upon that head were full of very gross exaggerations. He would further contend, with reference to the terms of the noble Lord's motion, that not only the evils said to be caused by the Corn-laws were exaggerated; but that the noble Lord was not altogether justified in saying that the present proposal of his right hon. Friend was founded on the same principles as the existing law. He admitted that the word principle was subject to a variety of senses in their discussions; there was perhaps no word to which it was so desirable they should attach a fixed and determinate meaning, and yet unhappily there was none which was used with greater laxity, or greater ambiguity in debate. If by the principles of the plan were understood a graduated scale as opposed to a fixed duty, he could understand the doctrine of the noble Lord; but if it were meant to be contended that the structure and calculation of the scale of duties (to which he believed it could be shown that a great portion of the existing evils could be traced) in the present measure of his right hon. Friend were identical or akin to those of the existing system, then he denied that this plan was founded on the same principle as that now established.

He would now proceed to argue as he had stated, that many of the evils ascribed to the present system were inseparable from the nature of things: that of those which were avoidable there was a rational hope that many would, under the new scale, be avoided, and that to a fixed duty, on the other hand, insuperable objections must attach. He thought the noble Lord would concede, and he thought every man who endeavoured to apply his mind with calmness to the subject would concede, that under present difficulties, and under our present circumstances, we could not proceed as if, viewed at large, this was a new country, or as if no legislation had ever been attempted on the subject. He, at all events, was of opinion, that either a graduated scale, or a fixed duty, or a perfectly free trade in corn, was open to serious objections; that what lay before them was a choice of difficulties, and a choice of evils, of which it was their duty to choose the least. He was ready to admit that the present law had not operated in the way in which it was thought it would operate, but that it had pressed with very considerable severity on the consumer, with a severity which the experience of recent years could alone convince its authors that it was calculated to act. But let them consider with fairness the charges which were made against the present law, and the degree in which it was fairly open to them. There had gone forth a denunciation—and he believed some hon. Members in that House would be found to be among the supporters of the doctrine—against the present system of Corn-laws as the main source of the existing distresses of the country. Now it was wonderful, and almost incredible, that dispassionate and able minds, that men of searching and acute understanding, should attribute to the Corn-laws evils which were evidently traceable, not to human causes, but to those dispensations of Providence which ordained the hazards of a periodical defalcation in the food of man. He referred particularly to the writings of Mr. Wilson—a gentleman he could not name without bearing testimony to the great talents he brought to bear on the subject, the great light which he threw on it, and the value of his information. But, it would hardly be believed that Mr. Wilson, so far as he could understand his meaning, and he sincerely hoped that he misunderstood it, saw no means of accounting for the difference in the supply of corn in the years 1834 and 1839, but through the Corn-laws, and appeared to be of opinion that the seasons of these respective years had nothing to do with the price of food. This gentleman contended that the habits of the farmer were formed by the price procured for corn in different years; that the high prices of 1829-31 induced him to sow an excessive breadth which produced a glut, that the consequent low prices of the years 1833-6 induced him so much to restrict his breadth sown in wheat, that there followed a scarcity of four years. And this change in the breadth of wheat cultivation Mr. Wilson really put forward as the main or sole cause of the recent high prices. Now, if the House were prepared to go that length, and strictly to adopt the principle that the varieties of the seasons had nothing to do with the price of wheat, he should despair far more than he did at present of a satisfactory and amicable adjustment of the question of the Corn-law. And here he might refer to the noble Lord's representation of what his right hon. Friend (Sir R. Peel) had said as to machinery. He did not know whether the noble Lord was singular in his impression, but he certainly never understood his right hon. Friend to contend that the effect of machinery must be the ultimate diminution of employment; but that machinery, with all its countervailing, and more than countervailing advantages, must occasionally glut the market. It was worth observing, that as long as labour continued manual, the producing and the consuming power continued on an equality, and supply would, as it were, maintain an ordinary relation to demand; but when we came to the times when, by some wonderful invention, a machine could do the work of twenty or of fifty men, it was, perhaps, almost a law of nature that there should be periods of excess in supply as compared with demand, and producers must be content, he feared, to wait for the relief and revival of the markets. He could not conceive any man looking at this question with temper and good faith, who could deny—taking into account the population and consumption of this country, and the possible surplus of corn in the rest of the world—that four bad seasons in succession must, under any circumstances, have a powerful effect on the price of wheat. But then the charge made against the Corn-laws was, that they aggravated the natural fluctuations of supply. Now was that true? He admitted that, in many respects, the operation of these laws was inconvenient; he did not despair to see fluctuation restrained so far as this country was concerned, within narrow bounds; but was the proposition true that it aggravated the natural effects of the scarcity and abundance of the seasons? There were several ways of applying a test to that allegation. If they looked to other articles they would find, that they were subject to the same variations in price. If they took the price of wheat for the last fourteen years, in 1835 when it was cheapest, and 1839 when dearest, they would find that the difference was 79 per cent. Now, he had received a statement showing the prices of cotton, in which there was an almost entirely free trade, and which was not more subject to uncertainty in production than food; and yet he found the fluctuation in the price of the United States cotton, between the years 1828 and 1841, to be 70 per cent.; and that of Brazil cotton 85 and 86 per cent. But Mr. Wilson had asserted that the price of wheat ought to be steadier than that of any other article in extensive consumption. He believed the very reverse to be the fact. What said Mr. Huskisson in his report of 1821?

> "There is one consideration to be constantly borne in mind, most material to enable the House and the country to arrive at sound and safe conclusions on this important subject—namely, that the price of corn fluctuates more than that of any other commodity of extensive consumption, in proportion to any excess or deficiency in the supply."

So that in wheat of all other articles, steadiness of price was most desirable, and least attainable, but, to continue, he would not compare the price in the home market with the contemporaneous price in foreign markets affected by the British demand; because it might be said, and fairly said, that the foreign markets were unnaturally stimulated by the state of the British market, and that the variations in the price of wheat abroad, were caused by our fluctuating demand, and the high premiums offered by a rapid diminution of duty. But, in palliation, at least, of the charges brought against the existing Corn-laws, he would refer to the prices of wheat in former periods in this country, and under other circumstances. It appeared from the papers which he had lately laid on the Table, that in the fourteen years of the present Corn-law, the fluctuations had been 79 per cent. From 1816 to 1828, the fluctuations had ranged from 44*s.* 7*d.*, the lowest, to 96*s.* 11*d.*, or 117 per cent. From 1806 to 1815, the price of wheat had varied from 65*s.* 7*d.* to 126*s.* 6*d.*, or 92 per cent. From 1796 to 1805, the fluctuation was from 51*s.* 10*d.* to 119*s.* 6*d.* or 130 per cent. From 1786 to 1795, a period during which very considerable freedom of trade prevailed, together with an absence of disturbing causes from general war interrupting national intercourse, he found, that the fluctuations had been from 40*s.* to 75*s.* 2*d*, or 87 per cent. Under the present system, the fluctuation would be only 79 per cent., and it was not till we got back beyond the year 1785 that we found even a decennial period in which the fluctuation in the price of wheat was less than in the fourteen years now just elapsed. But there was another point of view in which this subject might be regarded. His right hon. Friend had alluded the other night, but not in detail, to the fluctuations in the price of rye in Prussia, which held pretty much the same place in the Prussian markets, forming, as it did, substantially, the food of the people, as wheat did in this country. The price of rye was not stimulated by British demand; there was no quantity of rye brought to England that could influence the price in Prussia, and he had a right, therefore, to show by the fluctuations in the price of that main article of food that fluctuations might be expected in English wheat, and that as the rates here exhibited less fluctuation than prevailed in that article in the Prussian dominions, that was *pro tanto* in the nature of a testimony in favour of the present law. He took the price of rye from the *Prussian Gazette*, which he supposed would be admitted to be perfectly accurate, and the comparative fluctuation in the price of wheat in England and rye in Prussia, was as follows:—The right hon. Gentleman then read the following table, shewing the per centage amount of difference between the highest and lowest annual prices:—

	Wheat in England.				
	Highest.		Lowest.		Per Centage Difference.
	s.	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	Per cent.
Between 1821 and 1828	66	6	43	3	53
Between 1829 and 1837	66	4	39	4	68
	Rye in Prussia.				
	Highest.		Lowest.		Per Centage Difference.
	s.	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	Per Cent.
Between 1821 and 1828	22	7	10	9	102
Between 1829 and 1837	29	0	15	5	88

If he took instances of double fluctuations in five years, a considerable rise following a considerable fall, he found that

	Wheat in England.				
	Highest.		Lowest.		Per Centage Difference.
	s.	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	Per cent.
From 1820 to 1822, fall	65	10	43	3	— 34
From 1822 to 1824, rise	43	3	62	0	+ 43
From 1833 to 1835, fall	52	11	39	4	— 25
From 1835 to 1837, rise	39	4	55	10	+ 41
	Rye in Prussia.				
	Highest.		Lowest.		Per Centage Difference.
	s.	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	Per cent.
From 1823 to 1825, fall	21	7	10	9	— 50
From 1825 to 1827, rise	10	9	22	0	+ 105
From 1829 to 1831, rise	20	4	29	0	+ 42
From 1831 to 1833, fall	29	0	18	1	— 37

Here, then, was a difference in the comparative fluctuation of rye in Prussia and wheat in England of 155 per cent to 77 per cent. These figures, as he believed, might be trusted implicitly, and when they referred to a country where the price could not possibly be acted on by the demand for England, they did show that the fluctuations in price experienced in England were not altogether, nor even chiefly, in the main chargeable to the present law, but were to be ascribed to the nature of the commodity, and the difficulty from the want of elasticity and a power of self-accommodation in the demand of adjusting it to the supply.

Then again it was urged, that one effect of the present Corn-law was to give the foreigner, when we did make a demand on him, too high a price for his corn. It had been ingeniously stated by a Mr. Blacker, in a recent letter to *The Times*, that the position of England in the foreign market purchasing corn was like that of a person at an auction, who, after passing all his competitors, went on bidding against himself. It might be urged that the successive and rapid diminutions of duty taking place in a region of price where we might be supposed under ordinary circumstances to have already outstripped the competition of other importing nations, must operate, on the foreign merchant, not as an inducement to sell, but to retain corn, in the expectation of still higher prices. Now, with reference to corn supposed to be at any given time actually in the markets, this undoubtedly was an evil, but it was not without its benefits. No one could deny, that such a state of things must have the effect of bringing corn to us from greater distances—thus enlarging the radius of that circle swept for the British markets; and, therefore, if it set out by giving a premium to the foreign holder, its ultimate effect was to obtain a larger supply for the necessities, and thereby contribute effectually to the relief of the consumer at home.

It was also said, that the arrangement of the scale caused the holder in this country to keep wheat back till it rose to 73*s*., with a view of liberating it at a nominal duty. He did not defend the existing law against the charge; but if the price of the article was forced up to 73*s*., at least one effect of the operation would be, that a very great abundance was brought into the market. The noble Lord, judging from some of his published opinions, in such a case entertained great sympathy for the farmer. He was not quite so tender on that point as the noble Lord. He was not aware that at any period, not even last year, when the prices were driven up so high that no less than 2,300,000 quarters of foreign wheat were liberated at 1*s*. duty. Any such introduction of foreign grain had taken place as to give the farmer just ground of complaint; and certainly the entry of the large quantity had made the relief to the market more effectual. Undoubtedly, it might be true, that great inconvenience would be inflicted on the consumer until prices reached that height; but even here, the question was, whether, upon the whole, under a fixed duty, the matter would have been materially better. Allowing that the noble Lord had carried his 8*s*. fixed duty, was it quite certain that at this moment prices would have been so moderate as they now were, or as they had been since September last, or as they were likely to be in the coming months? He could easily conceive that under the 8*s*. duty, a certain portion of the corn which came in at the low duty of 1*s*., and gave immense profits to the importers, might have been brought in, and sold at an earlier period; but the great bulk of the corn that came in was brought from the continent under the spur of the moment. It was brought by the high prices, and without the high prices they had no right to assume that the corn would have come. He did not think there were more than 300,000 or 400,000 quarters in bond at the time when the rapid rise of price, and the prospect of the low duty began. But suppose that by a fixed duty they had brought out a certain quantity of it, what would have been the effect as the winter came on? If the large supply had not been admitted in the summer, it must have come piecemeal during the winter, when, the Baltic being closed, insurances high, and charges heavy, the market would still have continued in a feverish and continually rising state, and instead of the pressure on the consumer coming in the summer, when employment was abundant, and the wants of the people comparatively few, it must have come in the dead of the winter, when the charges of importation were increased, employment diminished, and the necessities of the people were more severely felt. If this appeared to be a fair view and a just palliation with reference to the operation of the existing law, which he admitted was a defective specimen of the working of a graduated scale, much more was it reasonable to conclude, that they need not despair of seeing a better specimen of such a scale under the proposal of his right hon. Friend conduce to the relief of the consumer and protect the grower, without being incompatible with steadiness in the corn trade, and with an increase of demand for our manufactures.

But further the noble Lord appeared from his announcements to-night, to have made considerable progress. He was glad to observe, that in the additional maturity of the noble Lord's views, from his experience during the last two years, the noble Lord now approximated to the ideas entertained on (the Ministerial) side of the House. The noble Lord was nine parts out of ten, nay altogether, a convert to the *minimum* duty; he was not even alarmed at the system of averages, although he declared them to be incapable of being rendered inaccessible to fraud. Now, let the House consider the operation of this *minimum* duty of the noble Lord, and let them judge it, not by comparing his doctrine with the old scale, which as the noble Lord truly said, was about to be abandoned by general consent, but by comparing it with the new scale proposed by his right hon. Friend. He would not take into consideration matters comparatively unimportant to the consumer, for it was of small consequence to him when the price of wheat was 50*s*., whether the duty was 8*s*. or a larger sum; but when the market was in a critical state—when the price was 64*s*., 65*s*., or 66*s*., and threatened to rise higher, let the House judge whether the nostrum of the noble Lord, which he was unable to carry, would have been a greater boon to the consumer than the measure proposed by his right hon. Friend, and which he trusted would soon pass into law. The noble Lord suggested, that there should be a fixed duty of 8*s*. or thereabouts, (so, at least, he presumed he might still understand the noble Lord,) up to the point of 73*s*. or 74*s*., and that the duty should fall at that point to 1*s*. only. His right hon. Friend's plan was to have a descent of duty of 1*s*. by 1*s*. from the point when wheat was 56*s*., and the duty 16*s*., until the duty became 6*s*., wheat being 66*s*. Then there was a rest of the duty, while wheat rose 3*s*. in price, when again there was a descent of duty of 1*s*. by 1*s*., until wheat reached 73*s*., at which point the duty was 1*s*., and where the noble Lord's proposition at last coincided with his right hon. Friend's plan. Now, supposing he was an importer of corn, under the scheme of his right hon. Friend, when the price of wheat was 64*s*., at this point his right hon. Friend and the noble Lord met, these two great planets were, as might be said, in conjunction; the duty being, according to the proposition of both, 8*s*. But what would be the operation on his mind as an importer, with reference to the two schemes? And what would be the comparative temptation to commit fraud and to influence the averages? Under both schemes alike, of course the importer knew when the price of wheat was at 64*s*., that there was a chance of getting the duty down to the *minimum* by holding out for a rise of 9*s*. If wheat rose to 66*s*., it would become a matter of considerable uncertainty, certainly one of more than an average and ordinary chance, whether the price would rise so as to bring the duty very much lower. At this point, under the scheme of his right hon. Friend, the holder of foreign grain would already have realized a portion of his premium by having got the duty down to 6*s*., he would thus have an inducement to relent, the more powerful as until the price had risen to 69*s*., he could have no further diminution to hope. So that the consumer would have a chance at least of relief. But the importer, under a fixed duty of 8*s*., would know, that he had no chance of any diminution of duty unless he could work the averages up to 73*s*., when he would get his corn in at 1*s*. duty. When, therefore, there was a short supply of corn in the country, there was almost an absolute certainty that the price would go up to 73*s*., and in proportion as the premium of the importer would then be large, he would set to work with zeal to starve the market and torture the consumer; to revive and increase, indeed, all those means of fraud which the noble Lord was so desirous to prevent.

So that in point of fact the proposition he now made, would have the effect of substantiating one of the most forcible objections that could be urged against the principle of the existing law. Then, the noble Lord said, and it certainly was one of the most serious objections to the working of the present law, that it narrowed the markets of supply, by excluding the more distant countries. The United States was especially mentioned as one of the excluded countries. Now, it appeared to him, that there existed some degree of error with regard to the relative position of the United States. He was informed, that owing to the facilities of transit, and the speedy communication of intelligence, the period of bringing corn to this country, from the time of its being ordered at Liverpool, was not so long as was commonly supposed. A gentleman of Liverpool informed him that, a period of six weeks might be counted on as the average period for bringing corn, when dispatch was requisite, to this country. [" *From what port?*"] From New York. [Cries of "*No.*"] The gentleman to whom he referred described himself as an enemy to a graduated scale, and he believed the estimate was pretty correct. However, he was not using this as an argument against the noble Lord; but he wished to know how the noble Lord's scheme of 8*s*., up to 73*s*. and 1*s*. over 73*s*., would work for America. When wheat was going down to 1*s*. duty, then those who sent to the nearest port of the continent, might have a chance of getting it into a British port before the duty should rise again to 8*s*.; but the American would have, comparatively, no chance of doing so; for, before his corn arrived in this country, the duty would almost certainly have leaped from 1*s*. up again to 8*s*. Therefore, the noble Lord proposed, by his scheme, to continue another of the most forcible objections against the present law. Now, let the House try his right hon. Friend's plan by applying its operation to the same country—America. If, when the American importer brought his corn to this country, he found the price of wheat fallen from the highest point, he would only have to pay a duty in proportion to the fall; and, even if the price had got so low as 66*s*., the duty would not then be higher than 6*s*., instead of 8*s*., as proposed by the noble Lord. Considering any amount of fall which could be rationally expected within a period of six weeks or thereabout, after the price of corn had been driven up to the highest point and had begun to recede, his right hon. Friend's plan was more favourable by some shillings to the importer from America, than the scheme of the noble Lord. In point of fact, when it was said, that the present law operated unfavourably as respected America, the objection did not consist in the fact of there being a variation of duty. That circumstance taken alone did not act more adversely against America, than against any other country. The objection was the enormous rapidity of the variation, so that after the ports were open at a duty of 1*s*., in four or five weeks, or whatever time might be necessary to bring corn from America, the averages were down again by 4*s*. or 5*s*., and the duty up to 16*s*. 8*d*., 18*s*. 8*d*., or 20*s*. 8*d*, a point of virtual exclusion under the circumstances. This was the valid objection to the present law, and this was the very reason why the House should adopt a measure which was brought forward with every prospect of its being carried, to amend the inconvenience. But this objection in no way applied to the measure of his right hon. Friend; for, supposing, as he had a right to do, that before corn was imported a fall of 6*s*. or 7*s*. had taken place, to state the utmost, from the price of 73*s*., the duty would then be only 6*s*, instead of 20*s*. 8*d*. This small addition of duty was not, then, calculated to baffle the proceedings of merchants, but might, on the contrary be matter of foresight and calculation, and might prove compatible with the steadiness of commercial transactions.

The noble Lord, in one portion of his speech, stated, that the change proposed by his right hon. Friend would work well for the purposes of evil, but as for beneficial purposes, it was doing nothing. Now, if her Majesty's present Ministers were doing nothing, he was not aware, that doing nothing was very different from proposing a measure which the proposers knew they had no chance of carrying. But let the House consider whether this charge were true. According to the best evidence which experience afforded, he thought there was every reasonable ground for hope, that under ordinary circumstances, the proposed scheme would have a different operation when wheat was already high, and the price rising, and the state of the weather critical and threatening, from the present law. He would not speculate on this subject, for he wished to lay before the House as small a portion as possible of anything so valueless as his own opinions; but he was not altogether without practical evidence bearing on the question, whether the new scale, with a gradual and moderate diminution of duty, would be attended with the evils of the other scale, having changes of enormous rapidity. Wheat had not been the only kind of grain affected by the present law, but, with respect to other grains, the operation of the scales of duty on them had not been the same as on wheat. He thought, however, in the first place, there was a great paradox in assuming, without proofs, as the noble Lord had done, that the new scale would have the same effect as the old in encouraging speculation. Taking the price of wheat at 66*s*., the importer might gain 5*s*., in duty under the new scale by waiting until the price reached 73*s*.; but, under the existing law, he would gain 19*s*. 8*d*. It was, therefore, too much to assume, that the chance of gaining 5*s*., would operate the same in inducing the importer to take the chance of the market as a bonus four times the amount. Or, again, if his price were taken at 70*s.*, there was now a bonus of 9*s.* 8*d.* in duty against a rise of 3*s.* in price, whereas the new scale would give 3*s.* instead of 9*s.* 8*d.*; and it was certainly a proposition requiring to be sustained by evidence that the operation of these two amounts, so different as they were, upon the corn market, would be the same. He would, however, state to the House the opinion of persons particularly acquainted with the corn-trade, on this subject; and would refer to a circular of Messrs. Kingsford and Lay, which had been put into his hands that morning. He believed their house was one of the most prominent in the corn trade of London, and the circular was addressed to their commercial correspondents, and intended, of course, for their guidance in commercial transactions. The document contained the following paragraph :—

> "As regards the ultimate operations of the proposed law, it must, in our opinion, with fair average crops here, cause the prices on the continent to rule low, and it would not be safe to purchase there without calculating on the wheat being subject to a duty of 14*s.* to 18*s.* per quarter, on being entered for home consumption in this country. There being no longer the same inducement to hold back for the lowest rate, as has hitherto been the case, the importers would prefer paying the current duty and selling *ex* ship, to incurring the expenses of landing. It would seem probable, that the average price will range between 50*s.* and 60*s.*, and that importers will very seldom have an opportunity to avail themselves of the minimum duty."

Such was the opinion expressed by these gentlemen, and he did not think they could have said so much on behalf of the plan of the noble Lord, as announced to-night. He next proposed to test, by reference to every other kind of grain, excepting wheat, the question how a more gradual and equable descent of duty was likely to operate on the holders of foreign corn. The average rate of duty paid on wheat from July, 1828, to December, 1841, had been 5*s.* 7*d.* The duty on barley, if it had paid in the same proportion to its value, would have been something less than 3*s.*, whereas the average duty actually paid was 4*s.* 8*d.* The duty on oats, if they had paid in the same proportion, would have been 2*s.* 2*d.*, whereas the average duty was very nearly three times that amount, being 6*s.* 2*d.* With regard to rye, the demand for it being limited, it became worth the while of individuals, being large importers, to act on the averages by making real purchases. It therefore happened that rye paid, on the average, 3*s.* 1*d.*, within a fraction of the same relative duty as wheat. The duty on peas and beans, if paid according to the average duty on corn, would have been 3*s.* 2*d.*, whereas it was, on the first, 5*s.* 9*d.*, and on the second, 6*s.* 11*d.* These higher ranges of duty, attaching of course to prices proportionably lower, showed that when the descent of duty was gradual and uniform, as it was on other grains, the same temptation, in great probability, would not be felt to hold back the grain until an extreme point, and then to glut the market.

Again, one of the objections urged as insuperable against the plan of his right hon. Friend was, that it contained a maximum duty, and the noble Lord undertook to show that the maximum duty was a prohibition, by referring to the price of wheat at Dantzic during the period when Mr. Meek was on the continent. It was stated that there was no wheat at Dantzic under 35*s.* per quarter, and that to that price was to be added 10*s.* 6*d.* for charges. He thought this allowance for charges exorbitant, or if not quite warranting so strong an epithet, yet excessive. But add 10*s.* 6*d.* for the charges; that elevates the price to 45*s.* 6*d.* and then, said the noble Lord, add to that amount a duty of 20*s.*, and it would be absolutely prohibitory. Even, however, taking that amount of charges, (which, notwithstanding, he believed, was above the average rate), and taking also the maximum duty, still he would deny it to be prohibitory. But, in the first place, What did the noble Lord mean by a prohibitory duty? Would not the fixed duty of 8*s.*, which he had proposed, be at certain periods a prohibitory duty? Could there be any given fixed duty which in certain states of the markets would not be prohibitory? One material portion of the question then was, whether the price to which that maximum duty was applied was a reasonable price—whether it was a price indicating plenty, because if it were a price indicating plenty at home, then, as long as Parliament maintained the principle of the Corn-laws, the principle of protection, he trusted that they would also maintain such a duty, as, without amounting to absolute prohibition, would secure the agricultural interest of this country, and the enormous masses of labour dependent upon it, from the competition of large quantities of foreign corn imported at times when it was not required for use, which would give the importers possession of the market, while the state of the market itself would prove the ability of the home-grower to furnish an adequate supply. But the noble Lord said, that this duty of 20*s*., when the price was 50*s*. or 51*s*., was a prohibitory duty. Upon that point he joined issue with the noble Lord. He denied that even with a duty of 20*s*. it was a prohibitory duty. With regard to the average price of corn at Dantzic, he did not think the noble Lord was correct when he stated that 26*s*. was the lowest average of that market. [Lord *J. Russell:* That was the lowest since 1830.] There were some years of lower average before that date. He thought, however, that the farmers of this country often fell into error when they referred to those low years in the continental markets; for, when they found that the price of wheat at Dantzic was as low as 26*s*. or 22*s*. in any given year, they were apt to assume that that was the natural price of corn at Dantzic, and everything over and above it was unnatural, and ascribable to the stimulus of foreign demand. It was said, accordingly by some, that the real and remunerating price to the shippers of corn at Dantzic ought to be taken at somewhere about 24*s*. He did not hold that doctrine. He believed, on the contrary, that that was a most unnatural price of food; but at the same time he believed that a certain quantity of foreign corn was grown which they might expect to get at a very low price, in consequence of the system that prevailed in foreign countries, where rents were paid in kind, where the difficulties of holding over from want of capital were great, and the consumption of wheat very limited amongst the numerous classes of the population. Those circumstances convinced him that they must be prepared to have a certain quantity of corn always disposable in the foreign markets at what might be called an unnaturally low price; and it was against those unnaturally low prices that the agriculturists of this country, so far as a system of protection could be reasonable at any time, claimed with reason to have it applied. But when the noble Lord said that 35s. was the price of corn shipped at Dantzic, that, on the other hand, was with some reference to the present prices. He did not mean with reference to the top prices of the summer months, but it was with some reference to the state of the markets in this country during the last three or four years. Presuming it otherwise, he did not know that we were absolutely bound by a statement which some council might have made to Mr. Meek. He could not consent to forego all reference to prices such as they had actually been in periods when foreign demand was slack, because, undoubtedly, there were certain quantities of corn to be had at and about those prices. But if the price was 26s., and if, as he knew perfectly well to be the case, wheat might, under favourable circumstances, be imported from the Baltic ports at 6s. or 7s., or at the most 8s. per quarter, that would raise the price only to 34s. and then they would be able even with a duty of 20s. to sell it at 54s. or with an allowance for profit at 56s. in this country. If, however, they took the price at the average of 35s., he would not shrink from the argument. The noble Lord had said, that the proposed duties would be prohibitory at present prices. He again joined issue with the noble Lord, and he would try the noble Lord by his own statement. He did not know why wheat should not be bought at Dantzic at 35s., and yet sold in this country. Now, the present duty average of wheat in this country was from 61s. to 62s. The London price was commonly somewhat higher than the average price of the whole kingdom, and taking the average for the entire country at 62s., the London average price would be about 64s. or 65s. But the scheme of his right hon. Friend, with an average price of 62s., would give only a duty of 10s., and that amount of duty would have, therefore, to be deducted from the London price obtainable for wheat imported from Dantzic at a cost of 45s.; that would leave the cost of such wheat to the importer 55*s*. And yet, what was the statement of the noble Lord? Why, that the importer could buy wheat at Dantzic at 35*s*.; that he could import it for 10*s*. or 10*s*. 6*d*., thereby raising it to 45*s*.; and yet, though a price of 64*s*. or thereabouts, might be had in the London market, and the duty payable would be only 10*s*., that the importation could not take place under the scheme of his right hon. Friend at the present scale of prices. It appeared to him, then, that the statements of the noble Lord himself convicted him of error. Again: the noble Lord seemed to speak as if in proposing the maximum duty of 20*s.*, his right hon. Friend was introducing a new imposition to be laid on the operative classes, or on the commercial world, in favour of the landed interests. He did not know whether the House had observed it, but they might easily learn from a document drawn with great care by Mr. Porter of the Board of Trade, on the basis of a work by Mr. H. Thornton, and contained among the papers which had been recently laid on the table of the House, that since the year 1704 there never had been a period when there had not been a maximum duty on the importation of foreign wheat of at least 20*s.* In the latter part of the last century that maximum duty was considerably raised, and during the war he apprehended the limit of price to which that maximum duty applied was gradually raised to 66*s.*, while the maximum duty itself was increased from 20*s.* to 30*s.* and upwards. He quoted these facts, not merely or chiefly to show that the agriculturists had a prescription of nearly 140 years with respect to a maximum duty of at least 20*s.*, although that taken alone was not unimportant, but because there was a period included in that 140 years to which all the friends of freedom in the corn trade were fond of referring. It was that period to which the committee of 1821 adverted as exhibiting the operation of a liberal system with respect to the importation of corn. It was a common and true allegation that not indeed an entire, but a very considerable freedom of the corn trade had prevailed from the year 1764, and that for a considerable period. From the year 1765 until towards the end of the last century no war had occurred of a nature to operate materially on the price of wheat; and there were nearly thirty years to which the opponents of the Corn-laws referred, as showing the beneficial effect of the system of freedom in the importation of that article, during which time they said, with truth, the manufactures and commerce, and likewise the agriculture of this country advanced with rapidity, and had advanced moreover hand in hand. It was during the period to which those persons referred with such triumph that there existed a maximum duty of 20*s.* And his right hon. Friend, in now proposing that maximum duty which he was told by some would be found to operate so injuriously to the country, was only proposing the duty which existed during the time to which the same persons appealed, and which they themselves admitted was characterized by a healthy state of the Corn-trade.

Again, it was charged against the present law, that by causing intermission of demand, and then sudden and sharp revival, it first deadened trade, and checked the export of goods, and then left the country liable to a sudden and extensive drain upon the currency, thereby deranging commerce at home. He would not deny that there was a degree of truth in that representation; but in answer to such charges against the present system he would say, they should, in common justice, endeavour to look at the whole of the facts of the case. It was not quite true that the British demand stopped during the year 1832, and up to 1837. Those were certainly extraordinarily low years, for the average price for the six years from 1832 to 1837, both inclusive, was only 50*s.* 3*d.*, and the average of four years 1833–6, was only 46*s.* 9*d.* That was the lowest average price of any period of four years, since the years 1786–9, when the average was 45*s.* 5*d.* He was, however, to some extent, gratified to find that even during those six years there had been an importation of 3,375,000 quarters of foreign corn, he did not mean for consumption, but for the purpose of bonding. That was between the years 1832 and 1837, both inclusive, and it showed an average demand for this country of nearly 600,000 quarters *per annum*, including nearly 250,000 quarters of wheat *per annum*. He should be glad to have seen that it was greater; but he meant that it was not quite true that there was no trade in corn if such a quantity was imported. The trade of re-exporting from the warehouses was not so inconsiderable as might be supposed. He hoped they would never see a recurrence of such years in the corn trade; but even during those years, and without any facilities being given by Parliament to the export trade from the warehouse, there was still an exportation of 266,000 quarters, including all grains, annually. But though he said that the demand was not absolutely stopped under the old scale, yet he did not stand upon the old scale.

He had already adduced facts to that House in the nature of experimental evidence, and the opinions of those who were skilled in matters of the kind, to prove that the operation of the new scale now proposed would be better and more mitigated than that of the old one, and in proportion as it was more mitigated, as it escaped the charge of interrupting the demand of foreign corn, and as it rendered the demand, instead of being irregular, continuous and steady, in the same proportion would it encourage the export of our manufactures, and avoid the risk, and diminish the extent of any drain on the currency.

But he now came to consider that part of the case in reference to the proposition of a fixed duty. For at this point he was met by the advocates of that system who contended that it was to maintain a steady, continuous, unvarying demand for corn, and that in consequence of such demand, we were to pay for foreign grain in our exports, and that it would, therefore, extend the export trade of the country, in the same degree as we might import foreign corn, and thus avoid the evils arising from a drain on the currency. That was the pleasing picture drawn by the advocates of the fixed duty; they contrasted it with what had taken place in the last four years, and plausibly averred that a fixed duty would prevent the recurrence of such a state of things. Let them, however, examine whether a fixed duty would really lead to that end. A fixed duty was one thing in theory and in the distance, it might be very different in practice. He did not now refer to the inadequacy of the protection that would be afforded by any fixed duty, low enough to be maintained at all times; but he confined himself to the question whether it would obviate the recurrence of the evils which had been alluded to. And here it would be found that the benefits of a fixed duty had been as greatly exaggerated as the evils ascribable to the present law. In the first place, he did not deny that a fixed duty would, to a certain extent, encourage the exportation of British manufactures. But, at the same time, it was too much to suppose there would of necessity be any very close relation between the quantity of corn which we might ordinarily and regularly take from foreign countries, and the quantity of manufactures which they would take from us. It had been argued, that the depression of the British export trade with America, which had been so severe, had arisen from our not taking American corn. But on looking to the year 1840 he found that we had imported no less than 1,000,000 of barrels of American flour, whilst our export trade had amounted to 5,500,000*l.*; and in 1836, when we scarcely imported any corn from America, our export trade was nearly 12,000,000*l.* Let them look also to other countries. They must not too readily assume that other countries would be ready to keep abreast of them in sudden and considerable changes in their commercial system. Take, for instance, the case of Russia. Did they suppose, that if they took Russian corn, she would greatly enlarge her demand for British manufactures? It was on the principle of obtaining that return that the fixed duty was to proceed, and it was contended, that it was from want of means in other countries to pay this country unless in corn, that our trade with them was narrowed and depressed. But what was the state of things under the existing system? The imports from Russia had been nearly 6,000,000*l.*, our exports to that country were actually less than 2,000,000*l.*, and of that amount a large share consisted of yarn and a very small share of manufactured goods, and the Emperor of Russia, by way of encouraging us to proceed in the work of removing restrictions, and of welcoming Parliament, as it were, on its meeting, had just published a new tariff even more restrictive than the one that previously existed. But it would be said, that the restrictive disposition on the part of foreign countries had arisen from the kind of policy which this country adopted, that they were led by us, and only followed the bad example which we set them. He was not then concerned to defend the form of policy of the Corn-laws adopted in 1815, or of those at present existing in this country; but whatever might be the origin of that disposition on the part of continental nations he conceived that we must now deal cautiously as regarded it. If it were true that they had been incited by our example, he must say, that from their present course they bid fair to outstrip their masters. He fully agreed in the position, that we ought to lead them forward in the course of relaxation, but he protested against the doctrine, that we were to advance to sudden measures of legislation, assuming as our ground only the wild speculation that foreign countries would completely, and in a moment, change a course which they seemed so resolved so follow. But passing on from that subject, he would proceed to argue that it was not true, that all the evils which had occurred in connection with the drain on the currency for the last three or four years, were attributable to the existing Corn-laws. They must in substance have occurred under any system of Corn-laws. Without tying the advocates of a fixed duty to any particular statement, he supposed on the whole they would be satisfied if there were a steady and certain demand for foreign corn of about 2,000,000 or 2,500,000 quarters in ordinary years. This was a large supposition. But suppose there was such a demand, and suppose the demand for our goods to be in the proportion of that demand. Suppose this country were through a diminution of agricultural labour, and a diversion of that labour to other branches of trade, instead of raising twenty million quarters of wheat to raise only eighteen millions, what would be the consequence under a fixed duty, if they were to suppose that the case should again occur which had recently occurred, of a succession of four bad harvests? In such a case how should we stand? It appeared that the quantity of wheat and wheat-flour together entered during the last four years amounted to nearly ten millions of quarters, indicating a deficiency in our crops to that amount, or of about one-eighth on the average. Now if there had been a fixed duty, and a fixed import of two millions of quarters, this deficiency would have fallen upon eighteen instead of twenty millions. It follows that the amount of our necessities would in that case have been nine instead of ten millions. A small fraction of the difficulty charged would have been removed, but the bulk would have remained, with an unwonted call for nine millions, as with one for ten, we must have been required to pay largely in bullion: the drain upon the currency would then as now have deranged the money market, the derangement of the money market would then, as now, have restricted production and employment, the restriction of employment would then, as now, have deadened the home demand, thrown the surplus upon our foreign trade, and forced down the prices. We must have had the very same catalogue of evils and upon a scale not very different. Glad indeed, would he be to be met with proof that under a system of fixed duty, that as to the substance of their difficulties and distresses, they would not have too much resembled what the country had recently been called to endure. Upon the whole then, it could not but appear that the faults of the present system had been greatly exaggerated; and that evils had been charged upon it of which it was not the parent. In point of fact many people had worked themselves up to a frenzy on the Corn-laws, and it had been made the scapegoat of all the mischiefs that had occurred. If anything had gone wrong, it was in consequence of the Corn-law; if anything had gone right, it was in despite of the Corn-law. But now let the House consider the positive objections attaching to the principle of a fixed duty, because all reasonable men must make up their minds by comparing the different systems, which presented only a choice of difficulties. In the first place, it as an altogether new principle of legislation. We have had Corn-laws for 500 years; but the principle of a fixed duty, beautiful as it might be in theory to some, mischievous as it was in the opinion of others, was at all events entirely new. In the table of former Corn-laws, which had been laid before the House, hon. Members would find that the principle of a *maximum* duty, at some particular point of price, was the ground-work of almost every Corn-law that had been passed since the year 1660, whilst the distinctive character of a fixed duty was, that it had no relation to price whatever, by which it got rid altogether of averages. A glance would be enough to shew that under all of them different rates of duty were affixed at different prices, until 1815, when for the first time import was prohibited up to a certain point. Thus as to the principle of these laws, it approximated in substance to that of the law now proposed, while the proposition of the noble Lord for a fixed duty to be levied on foreign corn was altogether a novel principle in our legislation. The noble Lord had, indeed, said, that the committee of 1821 had recommended a fixed duty. But a fixed duty from a fixed price upwards; a fixed duty from a very great price upwards. [Sir *James Graham*: at 80*s.*] A very different thing this from the fixed duty scheme of the present day. There was, indeed, a passage in the report, to which the noble Lord had referred, more favourable to the noble Lord's plan, than that which he had somewhat infelicitously quoted; the committee to which the noble Lord alluded, did in another part speak of a fixed duty, not, however, as a positive practical proposition, but as a measure which might at some time or other be considered. A state of things was just anticipated in which such a measure might be proposed; and the measure suggested, as a substitute or a corrective for existing evils, was a fixed duty to apply only when corn had reached a certain price, and that price a considerable one. Granting, however, that a fixed duty had been proposed in 1821, on whose authority was it made? On the authority of Mr. Huskisson: and a higher authority, in his opinion, upon commercial subjects could not be found. But Mr. Huskisson had changed that opinion. Mr. Huskisson subsequently saw reason to concede, that a graduated scale was susceptible of a more favourable operation than that which he had suggested previously. If it were said, then, that the report in 1821 was to over-ride his letter of 1815, so, assuredly, the measure, the conduct, the opinions of Mr. Huskisson in 1827 ought to over-ride the authority of his report in 1821, showing, as the latter circumstances did, that he then held a graduated scale to be capable of such adjustment as to be preferable to any fixed duty. This was not brought forward, of course, by himself as an authority for the existing law at the present period, but merely as an evidence, not easily, as he thought, to be disproved, of Mr. Huskisson's adhesion to the principle of a graduated scale. But what, now, was the real objection to a fixed duty? It was not merely that its advantages were much less than were pretended; it was not merely that it did not actually attain any of those objects which were represented as its inevitable result; but it was this—that it was, in point of fact, a delusion, that it could not be maintained; for this reason, for this one single reason—that it was impossible for the legislature to sustain anything much beyond a nominal duty on corn when prices rose to a high rate. The noble Lord opposite, (Palmerston) whom he did not wish to disturb, had said, and had amused the House by saying, that a sliding scale was a very slippery thing. But a fixed duty, under certain circumstances, was a still more slippery thing, because under the pressure of high prices it would be impossible for the Legislature to retain such a duty and it must vanish altogether. Appreciating as he did the authority of Mr. Canning (the representative and organ, as he might justly assume him to be, of Mr. Huskisson's commercial views in 1827), he would declare in that statesman's language, that when you have famine in the workshop and in the cottage, it is out of the question for any Government to dream of levying a tax upon that food by which alone life can generally be supported. But why indeed, should he appeal to authority so distant? Why should he not satisfy the House by an authority added to the proposition of the Government, and added too, in the most gratifying manner to night? It now stood recorded upon the admission of the noble Lord himself, courageous as the noble Lord was in debate, skilful as he was in the tactics of that House, able as he was in support of his arguments, be those arguments what they might, the noble Lord himself had said that night, that he abandoned the position of a genuine inflexible fixed duty. The noble Lord had declared, and most truly, that it would be impossible to levy a duty beyond a certain price. There must be a provision, said the noble Lord, enabling the Government to fix a point of price for reducing the duty in case of great necessity; the only question was in the mode of adjustment, and, notwithstanding the noble Lord's dislike to averages, notwithstanding the noble Lord's abhorrence of frauds, notwithstanding all the noble Lord had said and written upon the subject of a permanent fixed duty and its excellencies, the noble Lord now was ready, it appeared, to embrace,—to swallow entire—the average system, and to have a *minimum* duty fixed when the price should reach some given point. The jumps of the present scale, as they were called, were great, by 2*s.* and 3*s.*, but the noble Lord far surpassed them all in jumping and positively leaped 8*s.* at once. Now, he admitted, that the *maximum* of 20*s.* was greater than could be justified on any of the ordinary principles of commerce as applied to other articles. But it seemed to him that this excess was in the nature of a fair compromise between the state and the agricultural interest.

The agricultural interest had a demand for protection on two grounds, upon which those on his side of the House had the assent, not of the Anti-Corn-law leaguers certainly, with whom the noble Lord, from his speech that night in favour of protection could have no sympathy, but assuredly, the assent of the noble Lord himself. These grounds, were first, the peculiar burthens upon land; and, secondly, the immense investments which had taken place under the present system, and which would be ruinously affected by a sudden and violent change. Now, how did these claims stand according to the graduated scale? Its substance was admitted. The article in question was, of all others, the most fluctuating in its price, with reference to its supply; it was at the same time, the most necessary in this country (he hoped it would always be so) for subsistence; and it was further one as to which the grower had a strong claim, not of favour, but on the score of absolute justice, for a protection up to a certain point correlative to the burthens on land, and a further claim in equity to a consideration of existing investments on so vast a scale. Yet the fact stood admitted, by the noble Lord himself, that in high prices no protection could be given to the grower of corn. The state then being unable to give to the grower of wheat what is afforded to the producers of all other protected articles—a uniform advantage independent of price relatively to his competition with foreigners—entered into a compromise and compounded for this inability, by giving when the price was low (and when consequently there could be no injury to the consumer), a higher rate of protection than in ordinary cases. In the principle of this arrangement he (Mr. Gladstone) could see no injustice; but he could understand how it might be one liable to some inconveniences, and the success of which depended on the adjustment of the details; still to compromise with the grower of wheat for the inability on the part of the state to keep up the duty when prices were high by levying higher duties when prices were low, was in principle at least a fair arrangement between the state and the agriculturist. He had now argued, at great length he feared, ["*loud cheers in which both sides of the House cordially joined,*"] and for the attention with which he had been heard he most warmly thanked the House. He had endeavoured to argue, that with reference to the practical question now before the House—whether the protection which both the noble Lord and the Government agreed ought to be given to agriculture, should be extended to it in one particular form or in another—he had argued that the evils of the existing law had been greatly exaggerated; that certainly there was no ground to argue from the defects of that law against every law involving a graduated scale; that, on the contrary, there was every probability, judging from experience, and from the opinions of practical men, that these defects might under ordinary circumstances be neutralized by the new arrangement. And he had further argued, that a fixed duty, so far from being a corrective, would prove impracticable; and that it was, in fact, a fraud and a deception, seeing that under any pressure it could not possibly be maintained. He had now to press, moreover, upon the consideration of the House, that the measure proposed, be it what it might, was one of practical relief. He trusted, he hoped, he believed it was a measure which many would be found willing to accept, although, as in most measures, involving detail, dealing with a variety of interests, and rousing necessarily a variety of jealousies, it was not to be expected that any measure would command at once anything like universal satisfaction. But this he would say of it, that it ought to be received, not only in the opinion of those friendly to it, but of those opposed to the principle of the present Corn-law, as a great improvement; an improvement, too, it was which there was an opportunity of seeing carried into speedy and full effect, and without incurring any of those great and countervailing evils which must follow a great change in the Corn-laws brought about against the views of the whole agricultural community. To point out the monstrous evils attending even an agitation for changes in the Corn-laws, he might be allowed to read a most impressive lesson from the words of the noble Viscount lately at the head of the Government—a lesson delivered at a recent period, when, notwithstanding the pressure that had occurred, notwithstanding the high prices, the derangement of the currency, the depression of trade, the diminution of employment, Lord Melbourne, in June, 1840, used the following remarkable words on a motion of Earl Fitzwilliam. He was not now about to quote the celebrated imputation of insanity to agitators who aimed at the total repeal of protection, but language peculiarly applicable to the present period, inasmuch as it applied to any and every change in the law. The noble Viscount said—

"My noble Friend carefully abstained from stating what it is that he means to do—whether his object is to have a fixed duty, or a diminution of the present ascending and descending scale; but whichever of these alternatives be his plan, as I see clearly and distinctly that that object cannot be carried without a most violent struggle—without causing much ill blood and a deep sense of grievance—without stirring society to its foundations, and leaving behind every sort of bitterness and animosity; I do not think that the advantages to be gained by the change are worth the evils of the struggle, by which, your Lordships may depend on it, the change could alone be effected. We have seen great changes at no distant period—changes which have almost convulsed society to its centre, which have excited man against man, divided the whole country into parties, and left behind the deepest feelings of discord and enmity. I for one, am not for again adding to the force of those feelings by rashly adventuring to revoke and agitate them; and, upon these grounds, I feel myself justified in saying 'No' to the motion of the noble Earl."

Now the noble Viscount had said "no!" to a motion which had for its object none of those violent changes to which he had alluded, but the admission of this single proposition, that some change ought to be effected in the Corn-laws. That, however, which Lord Melbourne thus denied and repudiated, the present Government had—not conceded, but offered—not with the view of merely disturbing the existing system without settling it, but producing an important legislative plan, which was likely to be carried without the risk of those evils which Lord Melbourne had expected, and which he hoped would be, upon the whole, satisfactory to the various great interests of the country, represented in that House. In some points it might not be so to all; but he would ask, were they to go on Session after Session, debating different plans for reform of the Corn-laws, each man dwelling on his own favourite theory, and all allowing, meanwhile, the evils of the existing law to remain? Let the House hear now the sentiments expressed by either of the extreme parties. Those who called themselves the Anti-Corn-law Convention (representing, he was sorry to say, the feelings of considerable numbers) had met on Wednesday evening last, at half-past seven, when the right hon. Baronet's speech was scarcely closed, and had resolved, that

"The measure just announced was an insult to a patient and suffering people, and that it was only to be taken as an indication that the landed aristocracy were destitute of all sympathy for the poor, and resolved, if permitted by an outraged people, to persist in a course of selfish policy, which will involve the destruction of every interest in the country."

That was the half-past seven declaration, adopted perhaps in heat; but on subsequent consideration, meeting again at nine o'clock, they passed another resolution—

"That having further deliberately considered the proposition of her Majesty's Government, they deemed it their duty on their own behalf and in the name of their constituents, to record their emphatic condemnetion of it, and their solemn protest against it, as a *total denial* of the *just demand* of the people of this country."

If, now, he referred to the sentiments of other parties standing in the opposite extreme, he found, indeed, opinions expressed in a far different manner, in a manner entitling those who entertained them to be heard with the utmost respect. In resolutions passed at a meeting in Boston, on the evening of the same day, the 9th of February last, the farmers thus expressed themselves in a tone certainly entitled to respect and attention, though making demands which the Legislature would probably deem excessive. They stated—

"That a repetition of fraudulent proceedings cannot be effectually prevented unless all sales by merchants to merchants are excluded from the returns on which the averages are founded. If this were done, and several large towns, such as London, Hull, Wakefield, Liverpool, &c., were no longer permitted to make official returns, a sufficiently near approximation to correctness would take place. And again they urged, that to afford fair remuneration to the farmer, the average price of wheat should not be less than 60s. per quarter. They then proceeded to declare, that as the expense of conveyance from Hamburgh to London was not greater than from Boston or Lynn, the British farmers had no protection, except in the amount of duty payable by foreign grain. They further expressed their views as to a maximum duty: declared that such a maximum as 20*s.* would be wholly insufficient, and that if such a duty were adopted, it ought not to be less than 30*s.* per quarter."

The Lincolnshire farmers, then, did not deem the differences between 20*s.*, 30*s.*, 40*s.*, and 50*s.* duties, which, at certain times, had been actually payable under the existing law, as so much mere surplusage, but as a part of their substantial protection, which they did not find in the Government measure. What, then, was to be done between these conflicting extremes—the extremes of parties assimilating in nothing but that honesty which probably was in a great degree common to both, and in expectations occasioned by hope on the one side, and by alarm, equally excessive, on the other—what was to be done between parties maintaining these propositions so remote from one another, and neither of which could be acceded to with any prospect or probability of arriving at a legislative settlement of the question? But he did fervently trust and believe, that the House, indicating and adhering to its wise and practical character, would adopt, and by a large majority, the measure which had been recommended by the Government, as a great practical improvement — as a change, considerable, and beneficial to the entire community, while maintaining that great principle which the House was pledged to maintain —a reasonable protection to the agricultural interests of this country, and to that large, he would even say, that decidedly preponderating proportion of the population which was directly or indirectly, but essentially connected with, and dependent upon those interests. For his own part, he believed that a great majority of Members, considering all the circumstances, and all the difficulties of the question would give, for his own part he was certainly prepared to give, a ready and a conscientious assent to the proposal of the Government. And satisfied he was, that if Ministers should succeed in carrying this measure, they might reasonably entertain the lively hope, that it would be found to give relief to the consumer, to introduce increased steadiness into trade, to augment our foreign commerce, and the demand for labour, connected with commerce, without the countervailing evils of disturbing the vast capitals invested in agriculture, or the immense masses of labour employed by them: and, however, if this were the case then, however the measure itself might fail at once to realise the desires and impressions of every individual mind, however both it and its proposers might be misapprehended and misrepresented, and their motives maligned, they might rest well contented with a great and successful effort to render service to their country, and await in patience the universal approbation of the people.

Mr. *Charles Wood* said, he had certainly not expected, nor probably had his noble Friend, that the right hon. Gentleman, on sitting down, would give such indisputable proof, that the measure now proposed would give no satisfaction to any one. It was condemned as utterly abortive by the Anti-Corn-law League, and the agriculturists proclaimed that they considered the maximum duty as altogether an inadequate protection. Gentlemen on that (the Opposition) side might naturally have endeavoured to prove this, but they could hardly have anticipated such an admission from the first right hon. Gentleman that rose on the other side. In the commencement of his speech the right hon. Gentleman said that they ought to do everything to avoid expressions that might inflame the passions and prejudices of the people. In that sentiment he (Mr. C. Wood) entirely concurred, and in the few remarks he should address to the House he would carefully abstain from every inflammatory topic. He held it to be most mischievous to irritate one class of the community against the other. In the beginning of his speech the right hon. Gentleman seemed to have been in doubt what the principle now brought into question by the motion of his noble Friend really was. On the one side, the principle was duty independent of price; and, on the other, it was a variable duty governed inversely by the fluctuations of price. It had given him (Mr. C. Wood) great gratification to hear, not only the right hon. Gentleman, but the right hon. Baronet, in his able speech the other night, disclaim any vindication of protection to agriculture on the plea of securing a "remunerating price" (a thing which the right hon. Baronet justly called utterly unintelligible and impracticable)—this was not, said the right hon. Gentleman, the ground of protection; but the principle for which Gentlemen opposite appeared to contend, or rather alleged that they contended, was this—

not for the protection of one class, but for the purpose of rendering this country independent of foreign supply. Now, to him it seemed that any attempt to render us wholly independent of foreign supply was a matter purely visionary. During the whole of the present century we had not at any one time been independent of other countries as regarded the article of corn. He begged of the House for a moment to look at the course of importation from the year 1800 to the present time. The annual average importation during the first 20 years, beginning with 1800 was not less than 500,000 quarters. In the time that elapsed between the years 1820 and 1829 the average importation was not less than 400,000 quarters. From 1830 to 1839 the average annual importation of wheat and wheat flour was about 1,000,000 quarters; and the right hon. Gentleman had stated that for the last three or four years the importation of foreign corn amounted to as much as 2,000,000 quarters per annum. For these reasons it appeared to him most absurd for any one to imagine that this country could be rendered independent of foreign supply. It was notorious, that during the last ten years England had produced nothing like a sufficient supply of food for the people. That that inability existed was indisputable—it was equally indisputable that the inability was increasing, and had been increasing for a considerable time. The question was, not whether this country should be independent, but in what way, by what terms, and by what regulation could the foreign supply which must be brought into this country be rendered most advantageous to all classes. The question that debate was to bring to an issue was, whether that object could be best effected by a sliding scale or by a fixed duty. He apprehended that the conclusion to which the noble Lord wished the House to come, was, that the evils complained of relative to the importation of corn were aggravated by the sliding scale, and would be obviated by a fixed duty. He (Mr. Wood) did not mean to say that the effect produced on the price of corn by the difference of seasons could be prevented, or counteracted altogether: but such was the object of the sliding scale, and he was of opinion that the effect of the sliding scale had been, instead of diminishing, to aggravate the fluctuations of prices in corn. The right hon. Gentleman opposite had made many statements to show that the variation in the price of corn had not been so great as had been alleged, but he had not made out his case. When the House was told by the right hon. Baronet that the object of his scale was to keep the price of corn between 54*s*. and 58*s*. a quarter, and that his expectation was that the price would be kept at about 56*s*., he (Mr. Wood) asked hon. Gentlemen how far the last Corn-law had succeeded in effecting the object it professed to have in view? How far had that law operated in keeping the price of corn within bounds much wider than those now laid down by the right hon. Baronet? If it could be shown that the present law had failed in its object, what reason was there to suppose that the right hon. Baronet would be more successful in his new project? Mr. Canning had stated, that the object of the bill was to keep the price between 55*s*. and 65*s*.—a much larger margin—limits much more easily kept than the limits prescribed by the present proposal of the Government. A noble Lord, who was then a Member of that House, and took a prominent part in the debates of that time, said, after the experience of five years, that the price had been and would be kept steady at 60s. Perhaps the House would allow him (Mr. Wood) to state what the fluctuations in price had been: those fluctuations had exceeded 70 or 80 per cent., which had been stated as the amount. The allegation was, that the price would fluctuate between 55*s*. and 65*s*., but that the average price would be kept at about 60*s*. Now, he would read to the House the prices of corn during a few years, taking always the same time of the year, namely, the winter months. At the beginning of the year 1831, in February, the price of corn was 75*s*.; in December of the same year it was 60*s*.; in December, 1832, it was 53*s*. 7*d*.; December, 1834, 40*s*.; December, 1835, 36*s*. Let the House remember that the object of the law was to keep corn steady at 60*s*., yet in 1835 the price was lower than it had been for seventy years. In the following winter, 1836, the price was 61*s*. 9*d*., being a rise of 70 per cent. within twelve months. In 1838 it was 78*s*. 4*d*., and in 1839 it was 81*s*. 6*d*., being more than 100 per cent. over the price in 1835. He would now take the yearly averages, still bearing in mind that the object of the law was to keep the price between 55*s*.

and 65*s*. Had it done so? That the House might be convinced it had not, he would read the averages for ten years, beginning with 1831:—

Years.	Prices.
1831	66*s*. 4*d*.
1832	58*s*. 8*d*.
1833	52*s*. 11*d*.
1834	46*s*. 2*d*.
1835	39*s*. 4*d*.
1836	48*s*. 6*d*.
1837	55*s*. 10*d*.
1838	64*s*. 7*d*.
1839	70*s*. 8*d*.
1840	66*s*. 4*d*.

Now, let it be observed, that out of these ten years there were only three in which the average yearly price of corn had been kept within the range of 10*s*. prescribed by Mr. Canning. He (Mr. Wood) was, therefore, justified in saying, that Mr. Canning had failed in his design, even with the large limit he had assigned for the range of the price. It should also be borne in mind that at these prices there were none of those extraordinary "jumps" that had lately been so much alluded to. He asked the House, then, whether it was likely or probable—whether they had good reason to suppose that the scale now suggested would have the affect alleged when, a similar scale, with limits so much larger, had failed. The right hon. Gentleman truly said, that it was not fair to compare the variations of price in England with those at the ports on the continent from whence corn was generally exported to this country, and that opinion was entirely confirmed by the reports lately laid upon the Table. A gentleman, as the House already knew, had been sent to the continent for the purpose of collecting information on the subject of the prices and the supply of corn. To the industry and the competency of that gentleman he was ready to bear most willing testimony—no one could be better qualified than was that gentleman to discharge the duties which he had undertaken. The information collected by that gentleman was highly valuable, although he (Mr. Wood) was not surprised to find that the right hon. Gentleman opposite did not think it so for their views. By those reports they would find that it was impossible to state what the price in the ports of export would be, as it depended entirely upon the demand from this country. The right hon. Gentleman had seemed to insist very much upon the variations in the price of rye in Prussia. but he (Mr. Wood) could not think that the variation of the price of a staple article of food in Prussia, was a fair criterion of what the price of food in this country might be. It was not fair to test the variations in the price of corn in a highly civilized and rich country, having a great command of markets, and with the greatest facility of communication, with those of corn in Prussia, a country not more advanced at the present day than England was half a century ago. They might as well compare the variations of price now in this country with those which occurred a century or two ago—a period, by the by, to which the right hon. Gentleman seemed to refer with no little pleasure — when the means of communication were imperfect, when the roads were bad, when canals were not cut, and corn could not be readily conveyed from one point to another. If they took the price of corn in any poor country, and found it to vary more than in the larger markets in rich countries, it was no ground for saying that the variation in this country might not be expected to be considerably less, enjoying the peculiar advantages she did. There was a statement in one of the pamphlets to which reference had been made, framed from papers moved for by Sir Charles Lemon, in order to show that the variations were greater in foreign countries than at home; but the papers so moved for, failed in showing that to be the case. A table was formed by taking the lowest and highest average price in England, and at nine different ports, Dantzic, Odessa, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Memel, Hambro', Brest, Bordeaux, and Ancona; for the ten years from 1829 to 1838, and the variation was much greater in England than any one of those places. He attributed the variation to the operation of the sliding scale, and to that alone. The fair way was not to take the difference per cent. on the lowest price at each place, which led to most fallacious conclusions, but to compare the real difference between the highest and the lowest price. That he had done, and found that in England the difference was 15*s*. 4*d*. between the highest and the lowest, while in Dantzic the difference was 14*s*. 9*d*. In the other ports the difference varied from 13*s*. 8*d*. to 7*s*. 4*d*. The papers to which he had alluded not only showed these variations in foreign ports, but also that the operation of our fluctuating scale was sufficient to produce them. The inducement to the holder of foreign corn to withhold his stock till the latest possible moment when the duty was at the minimum point, was certainly not so great in the scale now proposed as it was before, and that really appeared to him to be the only advantage gained. The right hon. Gentleman had truly stated, that the advantage to the owner of foreign corn in holding over his stock during a rise from 60*s.* to 73*s.*, was 38*s.*, whilst to the owner of English corn, it was only 13*s.* but even under the proposed scale during a rise from 50*s.* to 73*s.*, the person who held English corn would gain 23*s.*, while the person who held foreign corn would gain 42*s.* The right hon. Gentleman had said, that last Summer was as favourable a period as could have been selected for the opponents of the Corn-law, to show the disadvantages of the sliding scale. The accounts for the present year were not published, but he (Mr. Wood) had no doubt, that what took place, was much the same as in the preceding year. In 1840, the duty fell, between July and September, from 16*s.* 8*d.* to 2*s.* 8*d.*, and by a reference to the accounts, it would be seen that in the week ending 30th July, 1840, 470 quarters of wheat were imported; in the next week, when the duty was 13*s.* 8*d.*, 1,370 quarters were imported; in the following week, with the duty at 10*s.* 8*d.*, 1,400 quarters were imported; the next week, duty at 6*s.* 8*d.*, 11,000 quarters imported. In the week ending August 27, 2,400 quarters, also at 6*s.* 8*d.*; and in the week ending Sept. 3, when the duty got down to 2*s.* 8*d.*, the importation was 1,217,000 quarters. The right hon. Gentleman said, that the high price was not ultimately maintained last summer, because corn came in at the 1*s.* duty; but, surely, the advantage would have been much greater, if the foreign grain could have come in a month before at the 8*s.* duty. Nobody would have lost anything, except the speculators in foreign corn, for whose sole advantage he (Mr. Wood) believed the sliding-scale to work. The average duty in July, August, September, and October last, was 16*s.* 8*d.*, when it would have been an advantage to have had even the fixed duty of 8*s.* A statement had been made of the price of the best Dantzic wheat in bond in London, and the price of the best English wheat in London at the same time, for 13 weeks ending September 10, 1841. Add 8*s.* to the price of Dantzic wheat, and they would have the price at which it would have been sold in the metropolis, had the proposal for a fixed duty been acceded to. Now, he asserted, that up to the week in which wheat was admitted at 1*s.* duty, it would have been clearly advantageous to the consumer to have had corn admitted at 8*s.* duty. And he knew of no better argument, that could be adduced for the purpose of showing the possibility of maintaining a fixed duty, than to show that a benefit to accrue to the consumer. In the thirteen weeks preceding the 10th of September, there were only three weeks in which the price of Dantzic corn in bond, with 8*s.* duty added, was higher than the price at which corn was selling in London. Would it, then, be contended, that it was advantageous, that corn should hsve been locked up for ten weeks out of thirteen? It was not a little remarkable, that in all the illustrations which the right hon. Gentleman gave of the workings of the scale, he always took a minimum price, higher than that which had been stated was to be the maximum under the proposed scale. The price was to vary from 54*s.* to 58*s.*; 58*s.* being the maximum; and yet there was no case in which the right hon. Gentleman, when stating the advantages of his scale, took a price under 64*s.* It was a strange way of recommending the advantages of a scale, that before the benefits could be pointed at, it should have exceeded the maximum it professed to fix on the price of corn. The case put by the right hon. Gentleman (the Vice-President of the Board of Trade), to show the advantage of his system, had failed. When the right hon. Gentleman wished to show the advantage of a sliding scale, he was obliged to begin with a minimum price of 64*s.* He said, that at that price, the 8*s.* fixed duty, and the duty under the Government scheme coincided; and he then pointed out, as he thought, the advantage of the latter over the jump which might be made according to the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell's) notion of 1*s.* duty, at a price of 73*s.*, by the forcible operation on the market by the speculators, in order to effect a reduction of duty to 1*s.* Did the right hon. Gentleman suppose, that any speculations could raise the average price of England by 9*s.*? The right hon. Baronet had stated his opinion that the frauds, to which nobody had ever attributed such a rise as this, had been much exaggerated; and yet the right hon. Gentleman, before he could point out any advantage in the Government scale, was obliged to assume a price, exceeding by 6*s.*, the maximum price which the scale professed to allow, and then, so enormous an effect as raising the price of corn in England to the extent of 9*s.*, by the operations of speculators. The right hon. Gentleman was not less fortunate in his dealing with the advantages of his scheme, as regarded the trade with America, for he was obliged to begin at a minimum price of 64*s.*, and thus again exceeded the maximum of the right hon. Baronet. But to come at once to the proposed duty, he was convinced that it would be a prohibitory duty; that it would be sufficient to exclude the importation of foreign corn. He hoped, that in the course of the debate, the House would hear why 56*s.* had been fixed upon as the proper price of wheat. It was thrown over as a remunerating price the other night, and, therefore, it remained to be shown why that price of 56*s.* was likely to be the price, and the best price, for the good of the country. Doubtless, a change would take place, and so there would be a great change if the actual prohibition were changed into a prohibitory duty; but if the effect of the duty was to exclude all importation of corn, it would not be worth while to make the change. It was proposed, that when the price rose to 56*s.*, the duty should be 16*s.* Now, if any faith could be placed in the official returns, as to the price at which foreign corn could be imported into this country, looking at the average of all the returns of prices, the probable price at which any quantity of wheat could be brought to this country would be about 45*s.* The consular returns made the price 40*s.* 6*d.*, and 4*s.* 9¼*d.* for freight, making together 45*s.* 3*d.* According to Mr. Meek, taking the average prices at different places, it would amount to about 45*s.*, exclusive of any insurance or profit to the importer, and a duty of 16*s.* upon 45*s.*, would give 61*s.* as the price at which foreign corn could be sold in this country, when English corn might be sold for 56*s.* That price of 45*s.*, he believed, would include all the wheat, good and bad, that might be sent from abroad; and comparing that wheat with English wheat, it would be found that wheat at 45*s.* was far below the average quality of English wheat, and that no foreign wheat whatever could be imported until the price in England came to 63*s.* or 64*s.*, at least 6*s.* or 8*s.* above that price at which the Government proposed to keep corn in this country. The right hon. Gentleman had referred a good deal to the past. Now, looking at the last ten years, it would be found that no great quantity of corn had ever paid a duty of 10*s.*; at the utmost not more than 500,000 quarters of foreign wheat out of 13,500,000 had paid duty amounting to more than 10*s.* on being imported into this country. It must be clear, then, that anything above that amount of duty must be a prohibitory duty. The great bulk of the corn which had been imported, had paid a less duty than 8*s.* per quarter. In 1830, there were 1,400,000 quarters imported, nearly 1,200,000 of which were imported at under 8*s.* duty. In 1831, 1,000,000 of quarters of foreign corn were imported, of which 963,000 paid a duty of less than 8*s.* In 1838, there were 1,700,000 quarters imported, out of which 1,500,000 paid only 1*s.* In 1839, of 2,500,000 quarters imported, only 55,000 paid a duty above 10*s.* In 1840, a duty of 13*s.* 8*d.* was paid upon 340,000 quarters, but nearly all the rest were imported at less than 8*s.* The right hon. Gentleman was mistaken as to the price of Dantzic wheat, the price could not be less than 45*s.* The wheat at Warsaw cost 25*s.*, the carriage to Dantzic amounted to 10*s.*, and 10*s.* more was the cost of sending it to England from Dantzic. He had thus stated what was the probable price; he would now refer to the present prices. Taking all the ports laid down as being most convenient from which to import foreign corn into England, the average lowest price was 45*s.* 9*d.*, and the highest 53*s.* 5*d.*, and adding to that the average freightage, without any other charge whatever, the price at the port of export, together with the freight, at the present moment was 54*s.* 5¼*d.* Taking the duty which the right hon. Gentleman would have at the present price of wheat *i. e.* about 12*s.*, the price would be 66*s.*, and this again would act as a complete prohibition. He apprehended that the probable duty, according to the statements of Messrs. Kingsford and Lacy, which the right hon.

Gentleman himself had quoted, would range from 14*s*. to 18*s*.; and this would be a prohibitory duty, making the price of foreign corn from 59*s*. to 63*s*. on the lowest computation. So that, upon the price of grain in the foreign market, the proposed duty—whether tested by past experience, or by the documents now furnished to the House, and upon which the right hon. Baronet's plan professed to be based—would operate as a positive prohibition. It was not necessary to go into any statement of arguments in favour of any particular amount of fixed duty. It was convenient to the right hon. Baronet, and he was perfectly justified in so doing, to argue his case upon the amount of fixed duty proposed by the late Government, namely, a fixed duty of 8*s*. Into that branch of the question he (Mr. Wood) would not then enter. He had shown that to the consumer a fixed duty of 8*s*. would have been a decided advantage as compared with the present law in the course of the last summer, which was the instance selected by the right hon. Baronet when the prices were high, and, therefore, that the argument of the impossibility of maintaining a fixed duty at a high price of corn, did not hold good. All that was aimed at by the present amendment, and all that it was now necessary to argue was, that a fixed duty would be better than a sliding scale. In his opinion, the advantage of a fixed duty to the consumer, under all circumstances, was indisputable; for, when the price of corn in this country was high, the fixed duty, would take only from the profits of the holder of foreign corn, and in no degree whatever would add to the price of corn to the consumer. As long as no great quantity could be procured elsewhere, and the main portion of the supply of this country was derived from wheat grown within its own shores, so long must the price of that wheat necessarily regulate the price of all wheat sold in the British market. If the price of foreign wheat were considerably lower than that of wheat grown in this country, it would be absurd to suppose that the holder of foreign wheat, of equal quality, would consent to take a lower price than that which the British market offered. That being the case, it was perfectly clear that the protecting duty, whatever its amount, would be taken out of the pocket of the holder of foreign corn, and not out of the pocket of the consumer. But the great ground for maintaining a fixed duty as against a sliding scale was this, that without it, it seemed utterly impossible to obtain that which he (Mr. Wood) held to be the greatest of all advantages, and which the right hon. Gentleman himself had alluded to at the close of his speech, namely, a regular, constant, and steady trade. Foreign merchants were desirous that the English Corn-laws should remain unchanged, because it was under the present fluctuating scale that they obtained the greatest amount of profit. This was evident from the report of Mr. Meek. He (Mr. Wood) confessed that he did not think that his noble Friend (Lord J. Russell), had pushed the argument which he so ably founded upon the statement of the right hon. Baronet, as to the similarity of price at the same seasons between England and some of the countries of the continent, so far as he might very justly have done. The argument of the right hon. Baronet was this:—

> "You cannot protect yourself against an influx of foreign corn, when your own corn is cheap, because the same circumstances which produce an abundance with you, will operate also to produce an abundance in those countries where the climate is similar, and in which seasons similar to those of England generally prevail. Therefore, if it be a dear season with you, it will be a dear season abroad; or, if corn be cheap and plentiful here, it will be equally so in those countries to which, in times of scarcity, you would look for a supply. Consequently, no fixed duty could be a protection against the importation of foreign corn when the harvest in England was plentiful and abundant, and the price of corn correspondingly low."

He (Mr. Wood) was sorry to find, that the greatest evil contemplated by the right hon. Baronet was the occurrence of a plentiful harvest in this country. The evils of a bad harvest and of dear corn appeared to be nothing as compared with the mischiefs of low prices to the agriculturist when the harvest was abundant. But, surely if the right hon. Baronet's statements were true—if, when the seasons on the European continent were bad, the seasons in this country were bad also—if when the price of wheat was high here, the price in those countries was high too, a stronger argument could hardly be found for extending our law in such a way as not necessarily to confine our supply to those countries which were contiguous to ourselves. Surely it would only be wise and prudent to extend our view from these neighbouring states to other and more distant countries where a different climate prevailed, and which were not likely to be affected by the same seasons which affected us. The right hon. Gentleman said, and said very truly, that the difficulties of our commercial relations with America did not arise from our refusing to take American corn. But from whatever cause the derangement of our intercourse with that country might have arisen, this most absurd state of things had undoubtedly existed, that we had been drawing the precious metals from America when she could ill afford to spare them, and when she was able to supply us with abundance of corn, and this bullion we had sent to other countries to be exchanged for corn. Who could doubt that this process was attended with a mutual disadvantage to both countries? Such incongruities would be corrected and prevented by the adoption of a fixed duty, and the establishment (consequent upon a fixed duty) of a regular and constant trade. The whole effect of the present law was, to throw every advantage from ourselves into the hands of foreigners—to put great profits into the hands of the parties who held foreign corn—to drive traffic from our own shipping to the shipping of other countries—to render the price of corn uncertain and variable—in short, to prejudice every interest in the nation. It was said, that no remedy for the present derangement of trade would result from an alteration of the Corn-laws. The statement no doubt was, in some measure, true; he (Mr. Wood) did not believe that even a total and immediate repeal of the Corn-laws would afford a remedy. But the repeal of them, or the substitution of a fixed duty, would produce a widely different state of things. It would lower the price of corn, and lead to a great alleviation of the sufferings of a vast portion of the manufacturing classes. To contend that a regular trade in corn would not be a great advantage to the maker and exporter of our manufactured goods, was a paradox so strange that he (Mr. Wood) owned he was surprised to find any one in that House bold enough to advance it. A statement had been made, showing the enormous sum of money which must be expended by the consumers of corn in this country in dear years as compared with cheap years; he believed it was in one of those pamphlets of Mr. Wilson, from which the right hon. Baronet had quoted, that that gentleman stated the annual consumption of corn in this country to be 16,000,000 of quarters; but Mr. Wilson understated the case, the consumption was much greater; it had been stated by some at 24,000,000 quarters, by the right hon. Gentleman at 22,000,000; but take it at 20,000,000, mark the effect of the fluctuation in price. In 1835, the price of wheat in England was under 40*s.*; in 1839, it was upwards of 70*s.*, being a difference between those two years of 30*s.* a quarter. Assuming the consumption of corn then to be 20,000,000 of quarters, the difference in the price paid by the consumers in 1839, as compared with 1825, was no less than 30,000,000*l.* Of course, the same quantity of corn would not be consumed in the dearer year, because the higher price would put it out of the power of many to consume as much as they required. But that was a privation—a privation to which they ought not to be subjected. The 30,000,000*l.* represented, as he (Mr. Wood) contended, the amount of privation and sacrifice entailed upon the consumers of this country by the high price of corn as compared with low. No doubt he had taken extreme points—30,000,000*l.* was an extreme case; but make what reduction one would—reduce it to the amount stated by Mr. Wilson reduce it to 15,000,000*l.*, and would anybody gravely state that the sufferings of a large population, a considerable portion of whose earnings were expended in the purchase of necessaries, must not be greatly aggravated when the price of corn was increased by 15,000,000*l.* in one year. It was very easy to talk loosely; but take the earnings of any one family, of a family not in actual distress, a family earning fair wages; deduct from these wages the amount expended in the purchase of corn when corn was cheap, and then deduct the amount expended when corn was dear. Mark the difference, and see how it operated to diminish the means of purchasing the other necessaries of life. Take the case of a family earning 1*l.* a-week, or 52*l.* a-year (this was the case of a family well to do in the world); in 1825 10*l.* would be expended for the consumption of ten persons, but in 1839 the same quantity of corn would cost them 17*l.* 10*s.*, so that whilst in the one year they would have 42*l.* to expend in the other necessaries of life, in the other year they would have only 34*l.* 10*s.* Take the case of a family earning less than 20*s.* a-week, and in 1839 the residue of their wages after the purchase of the corn necessary to their existence would amount to little more than nothing. He knew that in former times it was contended that it was immaterial what the price of corn might be, because the price of labour rose in proportion, and consequently gave the labourer the command of the same portion of corn. Directly the reverse was the fact for the last few years; for whilst the price of corn had been materially rising, the price of labour in the manufacturing districts had been regularly falling. He spoke now not of towns like Leeds, which his hon. Friend opposite represented, and in which the existing distress was so excessively severe, but of such towns as Halifax and Huddersfield, where, though the distress was great, it was not so absolutely appalling. In those towns, wages, since 1835 and 1836 had fallen at least one fourth. If, then, the price of corn since that period had risen 70 per cent., and wages fallen 25 per cent —if the increased price of corn were to be deducted from the diminished wages—what wonder that the distress should be so great and prevalent as it was. True, the repeal of the Corn-laws would not be a complete remedy; but it was absurd to say that a lower price of corn than that which we had had for the last few years would not be a great and material alleviation of the distress which was now so generally felt. The whole of the manufacturing classes, constituting as they did the greater portion of the population, were generally speaking, in a state, he would not say of actual distress, but of great privation. Their means of consumption were reduced—their means of paying tradesmen for articles producing revenue were diminished, and still diminishing. Unless some measures were taken—some measures similar to those proposed last year for invigorating trade, and enabling the masses to bear the burthens imposed upon them—there would come with irresistible force the absolute necessity of resorting to direct taxation. It was said that no burthen was so severe and so intolerable as direct taxation. He would not then stay to discuss that question. Upon the whole, in time of peace he believed that indirect taxation was the only mode by which a large revenue could be raised. As he had stated, however, he did not intend to enter upon that point now; because the discussion was properly confined to the consideration of whether a fixed or fluctuating duty upon corn was the fittest to be adopted. He owned that, under all circumstances, a moderate fixed duty was in his estimation the only fit one to establish. He believed that a fluctuating scale could never give the country the advantage of regularity of trade, which a fixed duty undoubtedly would. He believed, too, that the objections which the right hon. Baronet and other gentlemen had taken to the fixed duty were utterly untenable — and that without prejudice to the consumer, or to any interest in the country; and with advantage to the revenue such a duty might be maintained.

Mr. *Liddell*—The hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had commenced his speech in a tone of triumph, stating that his right hon. Friend the Vice-President of the Board of Trade had admitted that the Government measure would not give general satisfaction; because the right hon. Gentleman had thought fit to contrast the language of parties holding extreme opinions on this measure. The hon. Member for Halifax inferred that it was not likely to give satisfaction to either party. So far as his experience went he was enabled to dispel the notions which the hon. Member seemed to entertain; for he believed that the Government measure would be generally pleasing to the agricultural interest, and not only to that, but that it would be gratifying to a large portion of the manufacturing and commercial interests, who saw in that measure a decided improvement on the present law, without any risk of disturbing existing interests, to disturb any one of which was, as none knew better than commercial men, to bring ruin upon the whole. If it were not so what could induce the general feeling that commercial, manufacturing, and agricultural interests were so closely interwoven that no measure that affected the one could fail to affect the others. Believing, therefore, as he did that the Government measure was an improvement upon the present law, and likely to be attended with great benefit to the country generally, and that while benefiting commerce and manufacture it would also contribute to the interest of the agriculturist, he should support it. The hon. Member for Halifax had gone on to show the absurdity of the attempting to keep this country independent of foreign countries for its supplies. When he should like to know had such a proposition been put forward by that side of the House? The hon. Gentleman had first made his giants and then he slew them. As he understood hon. Gentlemen near him, their opinion was that this country could not for any long period be entirely independent of foreign supplies; but they at the same time maintained that, taking a fair average harvest, the country could, if not altogether, at least very nearly, provide sufficient corn for its population. A reference to past experience and facts would prove the correctness of that opinion. When, however, from a scanty harvest, the deficiency of the home supply occasioned a rise in the price, then was proved the value of the sliding-scale, which admitted the foreign corn at a gradually decreasing duty—and, in spite of four deficient harvests in succession, we had never failed in obtaining a sufficient supply of corn to meet the wants of the people. The hon. Gentleman had also advanced the same argument which a noble Lord (Lord Howick), whose only follower in that House the hon. Member had formerly been, had addressed to the farmers of Northumberland—viz., that founded upon the fluctuation of prices. That noble Lord had asked the farmers of Northumberland, as the hon. Member had asked the agriculturists in that House, how they thought their interest could be maintained by a law under which so much fluctuation existed? He greatly lamented that that noble Lord, whose great abilities he had always admired, was not now present in the House; but if he were, he would tell him, as he now told the hon. Member, that while the agriculturists were fully conscious of the fluctuations in the price of corn, and to the inconvenience to which they were thereby subject, they were at the same time conscious that whenever depression of price existed under the present law it was not caused by foreign competition. And if in consequence of the competition at home or unusually productive harvests the price of corn was low, the consumer had the advantage while the farmer had but little right to complain. The noble Lord opposite had recommended that when changes were made they should proceed only upon sound principles; but the very gist of the question was, what were sound principles? Were those sound principles on which the noble Lord had appealed to the country; for which he had fought and bled and fallen! Or were those sound principles which the right hon. the First Lord of the Treasury had propounded, and which he (Mr. Liddell) believed he would triumphantly carry? That was the question for them to decide. The noble Lord (J. Russell) had thought proper to propound some general principles on which all changes should proceed, and he had contended that one of the main objects of change was conciliation on the part of the Government to popular opinion. Now, believing, as he did, that the scheme proposed by Ministers had been most judiciously arranged, and that it had been brought forward with a view to conciliate, he could not at the same time concede to the doctrine that the principle of all change was to be conciliation on the part of the Government to the popular opinion of the day. Many changes had taken place within his memory which had failed to prove the correctness of that theory. The concession of the Catholic claims had failed to give satisfaction to those whom it was meant to conciliate. Again, in regard to parliamentary reform, they had been told by the party opposite previous to the passing of that measure that the people would be satisfied with that, but with nothing less. They had, however, seen since that period how little satisfaction that act had given to the movement party. Had they not seen the noble Lord in that House exert himself as strenuously to maintain his finality doctrine against the ultra section of his supporters, as he had formerly exerted himself in breaking down the system of nomination boroughs? And if the noble Lord were now to succeed in his proposition of an 8*s*. fixed duty, the party by whom he was surrounded would not thereby be prevented from agitating for total repeal; for the doctrine of the majority of that party was, that no tax whatever ought to be laid upon the food of the people; and they, therefore, would come forward next year and demand the repeal of that 8*s*. duty. Under these circumstances, it appeared to him, that the course the Government ought to take was precisely that which had been adopted by the right hon. Baronet; viz., carefully to consider the bearings of the question, and having done so, to lay the result of their deliberations before the country as the opinions of the Government, and he trusted that the same arguments which had induced the Government to submit this measure to the House, would not fail to obtain for it the assent of that House and the country. Those who brought forward measures merely to conciliate popular opinion, would always find themselves, in the end, as the noble Lord had found himself, miserably disappointed in the result. When the noble Lord spoke of an impediment thrown in the way of regular trading by the present Corn-law, he looked chiefly to the interests of the merchants who were engaged in foreign trade. Instead of considering the parties engaged in agriculture on the one hand, and the commercial interest on the other, his, the noble Lord's views were confined to the merchant, who should always take care to calculate his profits before he entered upon the venture. Admitting the importance of commercial enterprise, it must not be forgotten that the merchant traded for his own benefit only, and not for that of the community at large, and, therefore, his interest was not to be considered to the prejudice of other interests. The noble Lord had already brought his proposition fairly before the House and the country, and the country had rejected it at the last election, he, therefore, could have no very sanguine hope of carrying it now. The simple question now before Parliament was, whether the sliding scale or the fixed duty was the most beneficial to the public at large? He agreed with the right hon. Member for Tamworth, that it was necessary to give protection to the agriculturist, and that it was indispensable to adhere to the principle of the sliding scale. By the sliding scale to the home grower was secured a fair price for his corn, and provision was also made for a deficient harvest. He thought that the thanks of the country were due to her Majesty's Government for the care and deliberation they had bestowed on the question. He was happy to say, that as far as he had been made aware of public feeling on the subject of the new measure, he felt he was fully justified in giving his cordial support to the Ministerial measure. He considered it was a decided improvement on the law as it now stood. It removed many evils, which for some years he had not been blind to; and had any party in whom he could have placed confidence, brought forward a similar alteration at any period within the last ten years, he should have given the measure his support. With respect to the allegation of fraud in the mode of taking the averages, and by untrue returns, he believed a good deal of trickery had taken place. He had made inquiry into frauds alleged to have been committed at Newcastle, and he had several times received distinct information that large sales had been fraudulently made at Newcastle for the purpose of raising the averages; but there was so much reserve in the parties who made the disclosures about giving up their authorities that he was not able to lay the facts before the House. It was, however, quite notorious that frauds had taken place respecting the averages in that town. He thought the present bill was in its provisions, quite adequate to repress such frauds in future. The widening the range of towns and the change in the ratio of the ascending scale would remove temptation to fraud, and would tend to prevent individuals from combining for purposes of fraud. The Vice-President of the Board of Trade had gone so fully into the various arguments in support of this measure, that it was not necessary for him to go over the same ground. The prevailing manufacturing distress had been referred to various causes, and the derangement of the currency had also been noticed. The export of bullion in payment of foreign corn, imported after a deficient harvest, was a matter perfectly unavoidable. If there should happen to be a deficient harvest the country would, at all times, call for a great importation of foreign corn —and as this was a matter extrinsic to the ordinary dealings in trade—it must be paid for in gold, and this must produce inconvenience and derangement of the currency. If there was a great deficiency in the harvest in any one year, there would be a great deficiency of income, for the income of a country is based upon its agricultural produce. If a farmer grew 400 quarters of wheat one year, and only 300 the next, he would be poorer in money to the extent of the sum represented by 100 quarters. That which was true of an individual was true when applied to the nation at large. It was not fair, therefore, to impute to the sliding scale the deficiencies which had occasionally occurred in the currency, for even without a Corn-law, the deficiency resulting from a bad harvest must be supplied by the importation of foreign grain which, *at such periods*, must be paid for in bullion. He had heard a great deal about the distress prevailing in the country. The circumstance must naturally be so, for where there was less money to expend—owing partly to the money paid away to the foreigner, and partly to a deficient harvest, there would be a corresponding degree of privation. A portion, therefore, of the public distress must be attributed to a deficient income, created by a failure in corn produce. It was impossible to doubt that all trades were liable to experience periods in which prosperity ebbed and flowed. If one branch of commerce were discovered to be remunerative, capital immediately flowed into it, profits were then lowered, and eventually the capital so poured in, created an over-production, glutted the markets, and caused a stagnation of trade. He hoped, however, that the present unfavourable circumstances would shortly cease. He hoped, by treating the subject calmly and with deliberation, that measures would be produced capable of invigorating the resources of the country, restoring confidence, and reviving prosperity.

Dr. *Bowring* felt called upon to address a few remarks to the House in consequence of the unexpected honour paid him by the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government, by his attaching some authority to a report of which he was the author. He wished to say that he could not agree in the deductions which the right hon. Baronet had drawn from that report. The right hon. Baronet had sought to establish that the people of England enjoyed a greater amount of comfort than the people of Prussia; but even were it so, was it not the duty of the legislator to provide for all the community the greatest possible sum of enjoyments; and would a less happy condition of other nations be any apology for the diminished and diminishing comforts of our own? For the fact was, that while the condition of the Prussian labourer was daily improving, that of the British artisan was constantly getting worse. Nor would the evidence that the average consumption of certain articles was greater in England than in Prussia, prove that the working population was better off. Such statistics required to be analysed—and only by being analysed could any correct inferences be drawn. Now though the right hon. Baronet had quoted a passage from the report concerning the consumption of various articles in the Prussian states, he forgot, or omitted to state, that there was a great diversity in the consumption of different places and different persons; the right hon. Baronet forgot to state that while in Rogasen, in Posen, the yearly average consumption of bread was 93lb., at Oels, in Silesia, 192¼lb., it was in Berlin, 268¾lb., in Spandau 472¾lb., and in Ehrenbreitstein it was 1,128¾lb. Now the average consumption through 124 towns of the Prussian League is 306lb. per individual, and the great diversity of consumption in different districts shows of what very various elements that average may be composed. The documents he held in his hand showed that in Prussia the consumption of animal food was 34½lb. per head per annum in the rural districts, while in the large towns the consumption was 100lb. per head. Of sugar, the average consumption in this country was 7lb. per head annually; in France, it was 4lb.; in Prussia, it was 3½lb.; and in the other European countries, the average was 4lb. 5oz. Many articles, which were objects of extensive consumption in North Germany, were consumed in this country to a very small extent. Spirits were consumed in Prussia to two or three times the extent that they were in England; and the consumption of wines and vegetables was also much greater in the former, than in the latter country. The money spent in books, and in the business of instruction, in many parts of Prussia, was very considerable; and he was bound to say, that throughout Prussia, he had found the working classes in the habit of saving comparatively large sums from their earnings. In the report to which he had alluded, he found this passage with reference to the stocking-workers of Saxony:—

> "They are frugal in their food and drink. A great proportion of them are the owners of the houses in which they dwell."

The cases were few, he regretted to say, in which the most industrious artisans in this kingdom could call themselves the owners of the houses they occupied, or the proprietors of the gardens they cultivated. The report proceeded to state, that, when their work was not plentiful the artisans employed themselves in their gardens; and it added, that the state provided gratuitous instruction for them, which produced a happy effect on their industry and frugality. He had taken the pains to ascertain the consumption both in continental countries and at home, of some of those articles to the consumption of which the right hon. Baronet had referred, on a late occasion, and the returns would show, that while the consumption of the higher and opulent classes was greater here than in any country of the world—that greater consumption would reduce the average consumption of the working people far below the Prussian standard. He had applied to the conductors of an extensive establishment in this metropolis, for the accuracy of whose accounts several hon. Members in that House could vouch. They stated, that 145 persons—and he considered this consumption to represent that of the middle ranks—consumed of animal food $1\frac{9}{40}$lb. per day, or 447lb. per annum; and of bread $1\frac{1}{10}$lb. per day, or 401 lb. per annum. The average consumption of food per head in opulent families, including the waste which habitually accrued, was not less than 450lb. per annum; in the middling classes it was from 300lb. to 400lb. The average consumption of poor and rich, in the metropolis, was 107lb. per head. The consumption of the whole country was taken by Lord Ashburton at 134lb. per head, while his (Dr. Bowring's) estimate was only 50lb. Let it be considered, then, that in the very proportion of the extra consumption of food in this country is the amount of sacrifice made—of tribute levied from the consumers by a protective and prohibitory system. The returns from various parts of the kingdom differed considerably as to the amount of food consumed annually in the several places. An hon. Baronet, who was for a long period a Member of that House, had taken great pains to ascertain the annual consumption of meat in the county of Cornwall, and it was there estimated at 45lb. per head. In many of the poorhouses of this country, however, the consumption greatly exceeded that average. According to the dietary of the Reading workhouse, the average consumption of animal food was 117lb. per annum; the allowance of meat alone being $2\frac{1}{4}$lb. per week. In that House, therefore, the average allowance of meat was $5\frac{1}{4}$lb. per head per week; and, in one of our colonies, Hobart Town, the assigned servants were allowed $10\frac{1}{2}$lb. per week, or 546 lb. per year. Supposing the population of this country to be 26,000,000, and their average consumption to be 50lb. per head, of animal food, per annum, the whole consumption would be 1,300,000,000lb. per annum. Taking the wealthy classes at 4,000,000, and valuating their consumption at only 200lb. per head, per annum, which gave 800,000,000lb., there remained only 500,000,000lb, among 22,000,000 of inhabitants, which gave an average of less than 24lb. per head, while in the poorhouses of this country the amount of food averaged from 52lb. to $97\frac{1}{2}$lb. per head. If, then, the more prosperous and wealthy classes of the country consumed 200lb. per head, per annum, which he considered a very low calculation, the average consumption of the labouring classes, would be only 24lb. per head, which was a much less average than that of the working population in the civilized states of Europe. It appeared from returns made to the Government in France, that the annual average consumption in that kingdom was 44lb., English, per head. In Paris, the average consumption was 46 kilogrammes, or 102lb., English, per head. In Belgium, the consumption was 93lb. per head. The Belgian army was allowed at the rate of $1\frac{3}{4}$ kilogrammes per week, per man, or 200lb. per head, per annum; and the navy at the rate of 2 kilogrammes, per week, per man, or 228lb. per annum. These documents, then, showed, that though the consumption per head, in this country, was somewhat higher than the consumption in some other countries, the quantity consumed by the lower classes was undoubtedly less. He would now come to the immediate subject of their consideration on the present occasion. In voting for the motion of the noble Lord, he should be grieved if it were supposed, that he concurred in any argument favourable to a fixed duty on corn. The time once was, when the fixed duty which had now been proposed by the noble Lord, would have been welcomed by that public opinion, by which, in his conviction, it would now be repudiated. He thought the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken, had done well in giving the noble

Lord a lesson on the subject of finality, for no settlement, short of the universal repeal of the duties on food, would now satisfy public opinion. Such had been the consequences of delay, that this question was now thoroughly understood, and nothing but the free importation of food, would dissipate the public discontent. Reference had been made to the effect on the sliding-scale on our relations with foreign countries. The right hon. Gentleman, the Vice-President of the Board of Trade, had said, that such a measure would not operate upon our relations with the United States in an unfriendly or pernicious manner. However this might be—however it might be contended, that the improvements in navigation had brought the United States to be commercially as adjacent as the Baltic—which he did not admit—the position could not be maintained with regard to Egypt, Odessa, and other corn-producing countries, yet more remote. He held in his hand a letter from a respectable merchant at Leghorn, who stated, that as an article of speculation, so desperate was corn considered under the regulations at present existing in this country, that even were corn 80*s.* or 90s. the quarter here, no prudent man would run the risk of shipping a cargo. The fact was, that many cargoes had lately been shipped from Egypt for this country in the expectation that they would be admitted into our ports at a moderate duty, and the undertaking had proved most disastrous to the speculators. He had heard strong expressions in favour of the scheme of the right hon. Baronet opposite, which had been described as advantageous in comparison with the existing Corn-laws. The impression on his mind was, however, very unfavourable to that measure, even, as compared with the now existing law, for it seemed to him, that it would, from beginning to end, be more stringent and despotic. It was well known, that there were frauds under the old bill, but they were frauds of which the people reaped the benefit, for every fraud led to some reduction, in the price of corn, and every reduction in the price of corn was undoubtedly a popular benefit. There were no doubt confederacies and schemes by which the law was to some extent defeated; and from the best opinions which he had been able to meet with it appeared, that the law which professed to admit foreign wheat only, when the price of home-grown wheat was, according to the averages at 73*s.* being that which allowed the minimum rate of duty did, in fact, admit it at 65*s.* or 66*s.* It was plain, that on the side of the individuals who by confederating produced this result, the public sympathies and the public interests were, in a great degree, enlisted. But now the returns were intended to be accurate; the execution was to be put into the hands of a department of the Executive, against whom a certain degree of ill-feeling existed, and who were likely to do their duty in a stringent and effective manner. The addition of 150 towns to those from which the returns were now made up, would have the effect of lowering the averages by bringing the returns more adjacent to the places of production, and so they would increase the duty on foreign corn by elevating the averages. Now, the most important question with the public was, on what conditions they should be able to receive their corn from abroad on the lowest duty; and he thought that on the conditions proposed the public would not be able to get their corn from abroad at so low a rate as at present. Now, at the home price of 65*s.* or 66*s.*, corn was admitted on the payment of 1*s.* duty per quarter; under the proposed plan it would not be admitted till the home price was really 72*s.* or 73*s.* It appeared by the returns laid upon the table on the 11th instant, which had been moved for by the right hon. the Vice-President of the Board of Trade, and it was admitted, that the amount of quarters on which the average price was now collected formed but a very small proportion to the amount of the actual sales. In 1836, which was the year of the greatest amount since the present law came into operation, the average was calculated on 4,393,025 quarters. In 1829, which was the year of the lowest amount, the average was calculated on no more than 2,516,129 quarters. Thus on an annual average of about 3,500,000, the amount of duty payable had been regulated. But the extension of the number of quarters on which the average was to be calculated under the new bill would lower the average prices, and augment the duty. As to the maximum duty on corn, he thought it quite a matter of indifference whether the amount was 20*s.* or 25*s.* and, therefore, he felt exceedingly little anxiety as to the fate of the motion of the hon. Member for Lincolnshire (Mr. Christopher), and he was quite willing that the right hon. Baronet, if it would be any gratification to the hon. Member, should make him a present of the difference between the 20*s.* and 25*s.* *maximum.* The right hon. Baronet had appeared to consider 56*s.* as about the average-price for some years past, and he had said that he thought a reasonable remuneration to the grower might be had if the prices were maintained at from 54*s.* to 58*s.*, and this being the case, he could not understand what the character of that legislation could be that fixed the price at 73*s.* If 56*s.* were a remunerating price to the home-grower, on what plea was 73*s.* established by this corn-repelling law—and why, was there any alarm? Mr. Meek estimated that only 2,250,000 quarters of wheat could be obtained from the whole of the shipping ports of Europe at a moderate duty, and he himself thought that the whole world could only furnish about double that quantity; nevertheless, for several years we had been importing at an average of 2,500,000 quarters; and he was moreover perfectly convinced, that with a free trade in corn that quantity would be consumed, and no less a quantity than at present would be grown at home. It appeared he thought most clearly that for some years past we had had a demand for the surplus quantity of corn grown in the corn exporting countries of Europe, and his apprehension was, if speedy steps of amelioration of the present state of things were not taken, we might soon not have a sufficiency for our own wants. We must not long look for that supply from those quarters. Not a sufficiency from our own resources added to the surplus production of the countries to which we look for supplies. There was a growing indisposition among the continental nations to export their corn. They had made many endeavours to obtain modifications in our tariff, so as to enable them to export corn to us on more advantageous terms. They had uniformly been met with refusals from our Government; not, he was bound to say, owing to indisposition on the part of the late Government to meet their reasonable wishes, but because (the late Government) had been obliged to reply, that if any sacrifices on the part of the agricultural interests of this country were to be called on for the purpose of improvement in our commercial relations with other countries, that body would not be willing to make those sacrifices. From the United States of North America he had received communications on which he placed great reliance, and which he believed to be of good authority, which stated that the manufacturers of England are gradually supplanted. An enormous emigrant population (three millions) beyond the Alleghany mountains is becoming not the producers of agricultural articles to be supplied in exchange for our manufactures, but rival manufacturers, and forced to be manufacturers by our present system. The United States would be a boundless field of demand under a fair system of importation. Our own emigrant-settlers would be consumers — their affection for England strengthened and established by intercourse—but they are made manufacturing rivals. The Western States must become the predominant influence—will not the great American people—shall we repudiate or encourage commercial relations with them? The cotton manufacturers of the United States are already one-fourth of those of Great Britain—emigration will reduce the value of labour, and a large expansion of manufacturing production must follow, thus adding to the advantages possessed by that country, and giving a large accession of productive persons. The question, then, which ought to be seriously considered by the House was, whether the importation of corn was to be a source of prosperity to the people of this country, or whether they were to be debarred effectually from the advantages which extended importation must carry with it. We ought not to forget the influence of our legislation on the property of other countries—in the reflection of whose well-being we might and ought to trace the progress of our own. The right hon. Baronet (Sir Robert Peel) would, perhaps, excuse him for reading a passage to which, though it was contained in that report of his to which the right hon. Baronet had done him the honour to refer, he had not quoted, but which had notwithstanding a direct bearing upon the subject before the House. That passage stated, that,

> "The present English Corn-laws are eminently prejudicial both to the agricultural and commercial interests of the states comprising the league. Instead of assisting in the establishment of regular prices by a regular demand, they communicate other German mar-

kets all the fluctuations of our own, and make the pursuits of agriculture a perilous lottery. Indeed, they produce even greater vicissitudes of price abroad than they create at home, for when, on the one hand, there is no buyer in the markets to take off the surplus produce, the prices fall far beneath those of which we have any experience; while, on the other, when the English grower is unable to supply the consumer, it is to the foreign agriculturist that the *maximum* price of our markets is paid. The consequence is, that the small continental cultivator, who cannot wait for the elevated prices of the fluctuating British market, but must speedily realize the amount of his crops to provide for his necessities, obtains in general only the ordinary low prices of his own market, while inordinate profits are frequently the lot of the wealthy proprietor, or speculative merchant, whose purpose is answered by hanging on in expectation of the inordinate profits which are exacted by sudden but uncertain demand. In this way the benefit of British importation is minimized to the German farmer, and whenever we are compelled to import, the prices are enormously raised to the consumer, as our purchases are necessarily made from a comparatively small number of dealers in corn, or opulent land proprietors. But the effect on the labouring population of Germany is calamitous, interfering not only with their enjoyments, but their means of existence. Nor do our Corn-laws affect injuriously the farmer and the labourer alone; they disturb the whole commercial interests of Europe. Wherever England is a large importer of corn the exchanges are disjointed, so as to bring uncertainty and risk into all trading combinations. In the hostile state of the tariffs of different nations there is no provision whatever for such an interchange of exports and imports, as would regulate a balance of debt and credit without serious shocks. On the contrary, the hostile and absurd legislation which has obtained in most of the commercial countries of Europe, so dams up and confines the natural tendencies of commerce to level and arrange its own transactions, that, whenever a sudden and large demand for any article occurs, it is accompanied by a pecuniary crisis, often perilous in the highest degree, and this crisis injures, not merely the importing country, but spreads its baneful influence over every other with which that country is in communication. All prices are affected—credit is shaken—the value of money is subjected to sudden changes, and no prudence can foresee or provide against the consequences."

If the history of the exports and imports of wheat into this country were looked to it would be seen what was the extraordinary increase in the value of lands which had been affected, and how great were the increased profits which had been put into the pockets of the landlords. From 1697, up to 1766, exportation of wheat had been the rule, amounting in one year (1750) to 950,000 quarters, and frequently exceeding 500,000 quarters of home-grown corn. Between 1766 and 1817, sometimes there had been exportation and sometimes importation. From about the period of the introduction of the cotton manufactures the tables turned in favour of importation. From 1817, importation had been generally varying from 424,000 quarters, the *minimum* in 1823, to 3,100,000 quarters, the *maximum* in 1839, and upon the average importation of the last four years had been 2,500,000 quarters. See, then, what were the benefits and acquisitions of wealth which had accrued to the proprietors of land under these circumstances. There had been gradually brought about a change by which we had become an importing instead of an exporting country—and all the differences in the price which these changed circumstances had produced were profit to the landlords. While we exported, the price of wheat in this country must be lower than that of the country to which we exported, by at least the cost of transport—which could not be less than 6*s.* per quarter, and we would not import unless the price of wheat in this country were at least 6*s.* higher than that of the country from which we imported. There then in the progress of less than a century was an increased value of 12*s.* per quarter on all the produce of our land. That produce had been estimated to represent at least 45,000,000 quarters of wheat, and this enormous increase in value would give to the landed interest a yearly augmentation of not less a sum than 27,000,000*l.* sterling. Taking the fee simple of their property as equivalent to thirty years' purchase this would amount to an increase of the value of their fee simple of not less than 810,000,000*l.* sterling. Yet they were told of the peculiar sacrifices made by the landed interest. He had hoped that before this debate came on they would have been afforded some opportunity of comparing the amount of tax levied upon land in this country with the amount levied in other countries, but the only official document they had, was the statement of the budget of Belgium for the year 1841. It appeared that the amount of the budget for that year was 3,300,000*l.* sterling, of which the direct tax levied upon land yielded 1,163,000*l.* sterling, or nearly the whole amount of the land-tax levied in this country. From other sources, not official, but which would no doubt be confirmed when the documents were laid on the Table, he had derived some statements of the amount of taxation on land in certain countries of Europe. In Prussia, the revenue of which was 7,700,000*l.* sterling, the amount of taxation levied direct upon land was 4,000,000*l.* sterling. In Austria, where the revenue amounted to 16,000,000*l.* sterling, there was out of it a sum of 8,000,000*l.* sterling derived from a direct tax on land and domains. In France, where the revenue was 40,000,000*l.* sterling, the amount derived from direct taxes on land was 14,000,000*l.* sterling; in fact, it was so heavy in amount that they were obliged to distribute it into twelve collections, and receive it once a month. Yet in this country the land-tax was not one-fortieth of the whole revenue. Now, and then, they had some opportunity of ascertaining what had been the progress in value of land,—and what the augmented burthens on land, while the taxes on labour and the labourer had been enormously increasing. It would be found that these burthens had been stationary notwithstanding the incredible increase in the value of landed property—while the taxes on consumption—the taxes paid by the community had fearfully augmented. What proportion had the taxes paid by the landlord borne to his income as contrasted with the degree in which taxation pressed upon the poor man's wages? On a return of 100 parishes in Scotland the rental in 1791 was 287,824*l.*, which in 1841 had augmented to 744,273*l.*, which in 1660, nearly three-fourths of this number (of which the rentals had been made up) being seventy-two, gave only a rental of 17,878*l.* per annum. The land tax continued stationary —not a farthing had been added to the direct claims upon these estates—though their value had increased more than thirty-fold. This was a state of things that manifestly would not long be tolerated. It was idle for hon. Members to suppose that this question could be disposed of out of the House, as it was within the House, with a better understanding of the question,—a keener sense of the injustice inflicted,—was associated a determination to have the injustice removed. The feeling was growing, gathering, becoming terrible. The voice of the country was not yet heard, but it would make itself heard. It was not for the advocates of alteration in the Corn-laws to menace, but it did become them to foretel, and he (Dr. Bowring) would venture to prophesy, that the hon. Gentleman would find himself ere long in a path in which danger and darkness would encompass him, and then there would be no solution of his difficulties but by the recognition of the great principle, that the bread and provisions of the people ought not to be taxed.

Mr. *Ferrand:* In rising, Sir, to address the House, I feel deeply sensible of the awful responsibility under which I am placed; for I have been requested, by the working classes in the North of England, to plead their cause before you in the presence of, and to ask for protection from, their oppressors. But, I feel fortified by the recollection, that when during the last Session I rose to address this House, I had only to preface my remarks by appealing to hon. Members on behalf of the working classes, to obtain from them a most indulgent hearing; and, Sir, I feel convinced that a similar kind reception accorded to me this night will again obtain for the House the gratitude both of the manufacturing operatives and of myself. Sir, it has been my lot, from my youth upwards, to reside in the very heart of the manufacturing districts, and the first public act of my life was to respond to the request of these operatives, that I would assist them in bursting asunder the bonds of their oppressors. Sir, the working classes deny the allegations contained in those petitions which have been lately laid on that Table with so much stage effect, they declare them to be false; nay, more, they assert that the promoters of them have never dared publicly to appeal to themselves in masses, to give their assent; they declare them to be a fraud upon, as well as an insult to, this House; that they have been got up by making a mockery of religion; and that their masters have exacted their signatures to these petitions with a tyranny and oppression that is an outrage upon the liberty of the subject. But before I bring the question in which I am so deeply interested more particularly under the notice of this House, I will just allude to what the noble Lord opposite (Lord J. Russell) has to-night asserted, that the question now before the House is one for the country and not for the Legislature to decide. I thought that the noble

Lord and his Colleagues had dissolved the late Parliament, and appealed to the country upon this very question. Sir, the majority sitting upon these benches is his answer. He appealed to the country in support of his fixed duty, the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) in favour of the sliding scale. It is certainly true that the noble Lord was returned to the House, backed by a majority of (some said) nine dead men; but the right hon. Baronet had taken his seat by a majority of ninety-one living representatives of the people. The noble Lord, boiling with rage at his ignominious defeat, had asserted that his majority was gained by fifty different false statements. But what said Lord Morpeth on the hustings at Leeds, in the presence of the two hon. Members for the West Riding, and of the hon. Members for that borough. He declared that there could be no mistake between the propositions of the Whig Government and those of the right hon. Baronet and his supporters; the one party was for free trade and protective duties; that the handwriting was upon the wall, and that he who ran might read it. Sir, the electors did read it, and sent my two hon. Friends to convey their answer. Mr. Baines, too, in his paper (an authority with hon. Members opposite) had asserted that it was not the landed interest, but the manufacturers who had returned the two hon. Members, and that they had, by so doing, declared themselves in favour of a sliding scale, instead of either a fixed duty or the abolition of the Corn-laws. Sir, during the recess, I thought it my duty to watch the proceedings of the Anti-Corn-law League, who were agitating the country by the most violent and infamous placards, headed in large letters—"the base, bloody, and brutal landlords keep the bread of life from the poor;" and who were sending forth agitators, uttering falsehoods even more horrible than this, to pay whose expenses they have lately been exposing their wives and daughters at Manchester, to the insolence of every coxcomb who chose to pay a shilling for his amusement. I also made inquiries into the truth of their assertions that the Corn-laws were the cause of the depression of trade, and of the misery and starvation of the working classes; and I found, that during the operation of the Corn-laws in the last twenty years, the Messrs. Marshall, flax spinners of Leeds, have accumulated two millions in money, and have purchased immense landed estates, but this firm were not satisfied with this enormous wealth; they must carry out, by themselves, the principles of free trade, and set up mills in Belgium where there are no Corn-laws, and where labour is at a starvation price; and as some Gentlemen opposite may wish to follow their example, I will give them the opportunity. On the 29th of January, 1842, there appeared an advertisement in the *Leeds Intelligencer*, from a person in Brussels, who was desirous of meeting with a partner of commercial experience. He states himself to be "possessed of a splendid estate of 100 acres of land, situated on the banks of the river Dyle, within three miles of the Louvain railway;—that there were plenty of populous villages in the neighbourhood; that wages were considerably lower than in any other part of the country; that an exact estimate had been made of the number of operatives necessary to be employed in a flax mill of 10,000 or 14,000 spindles, at a saving of 2,000*l.* annually; that Belgian flax mills are protected for the home market, by an inward duty upon foreign yarns of about 10 per cent. and in all probability also an export duty of 6 per cent will soon be laid upon raw flax, and of 25 per cent. upon tow. A flax and tow-mill in the locality, with its hydraulic power and cheap wages, will, in all probability, yield 25 per cent. per annum." I will add a few more instances of the injurious effects of the Corn-laws of Anti-Corn-law League manufacturers. I am credibly informed, and the House will rejoice to hear, that the credit of the hon. Member for Manchester (Mr. M. Philips) stands as high as ever on the Exchange in Manchester;—that he is still a man of immense wealth, and has purchased extensive landed estates. The hon. Member for Salford (Mr. Brotherton) it is true, had long since retired from trade; but so horror-struck was he with the cruelty and oppression of that factory system, by which his enormous fortune was amassed, that he had determined upon spending the remainder of his life in assisting to amend it. The hon. Member for Stockport, too, (Mr. Cobden,) had during these last twelve years accumulated half a million of money, and when, night after night, during the last Session he was asserting that the Corn-laws had ruined the trade in Lancashire, he was actually, at that very time, running his mill,* both day and night; but, Sir, I must admit that the hon. and learned Member for Bolton (Dr. Bowring) has produced the only argument in favour of a repeal of the Corn-laws; for his opposition to them has enabled him to practise his principles of free-trade on the public purse to such an extent, as very fairly to have entitled him to the character of a freebooter. [*Laughter, and cries of order.*] I beg pardon, Sir, if I have used too strong a word, but the working classes cannot understand upon what other principles the learned Doctor has pocketed 17,000*l.* of the public money. In my own neighbourhood, too, I made enquiries into the state of trade, and I will call the attention of the House to a placard which I hold in my hand, dated the 8th of May, 1841. At the commencement of that month, her Majesty's late Government (tottering to their fall), issued a circular throughout the country calling on their friends to agitate for a moderate fixed duty on corn. One of these circulars found its way to Bingley, and a meeting of Anti-Corn-law land and mill-owners was immediately held,—W. Ellis, Esq., in the chair. They agreed to resolutions, stating,

> "That the cotton and worsted trades carried on in that parish had been in a most depressed state for the last three or four years, —that such depression had reduced to poverty and distress great numbers of the working classes, who were wandering through the day in search of work in a state of miserable despondency."

And they attributed this distress to the Corn-laws. The remainder of the petition is full of cant phrases similar to those generally used by the Anti-Corn-law League, such as "navigating the earth," "trading at the antipodes," "exchanging Manchester cotton-balls and Sheffield needles for cheese, and St. Bernard dogskins on the tops of the Alps, &c." There were thirteen signatures to this precious document, one copy of which was transmitted to the House of Commons, another to the House of Lords, and a third to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, to be used by him and his Colleagues in a certain quarter to obtain a dissolution of Parliament. I will now, Sir, give a brief history of these thirteen petitioners. The chairman of this meeting, since these ruinous Corn-laws came into operation, has purchased a mill, and a very valuable estate in the parish, and during these very three or four last years, whilst the cotton trade has been in so depressed a state, he has actually erected one immense mill, taken another, and filled them with power looms. The second signature is that of a gentleman, who is partner in a firm, which has, during the last thirty years, purchased landed estates, valued by them at 18,000*l.* a year, besides realizing 25,000*l.* a year, in money; and has also, during most of this period, as well as during the whole of the last three or four years, been working four immense cotton mills. The third signature is that of a person who, five years ago, retired from the linen-drapery business, and who has, during these last three or four years, purchased one mill, taken two more, filled them all three with power looms, and is carrying on what is called in Yorkshire, "a rattling trade." The fourth on the list was a few years back an operative paper maker: but he has, during the last three or four years, purchased one of the largest paper mills in that part of the country, a very pretty landed estate adjoining to it, keeps his carriage and pair, and lives in dashing style. The fifth name is that of a worsted manufacturer, who is supposed to have during these last twenty years made 30,000*l.* or 40,000*l.*, and he, too, during these last three or four years, has erected one of the largest worsted mills in the country, has filled it with power-looms, and he also is carrying on "a rattling trade." The sixth is a grocer in the town, he has saved a pretty income and educated his family well, but being a Dissenter, and anxious to show his hatred towards the Established Church, has brought up one of his sons to enter that church and receive a little of its wool. The seventh on the list, three or four years ago, purchased a very large cotton-mill, and a quantity of land surrounding it. He also has filled it with power-looms, and is carrying on "a rattling trade." The eighth man has also during these last three or four years, filled his mill with power-looms, whilst the ninth has purchased considerable landed property in the parish, and retired altogether from trade. The remainder I believe to be either sons or persons connected with those whom I have already mentioned.

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* Cotton print works, situated near Chorley.

[*Hear, hear, and laughter.*] But, Sir, I wish this were all I have to bring before the House, connected with this placard. It is my painful duty now to mention a fact that will soon stop the derisive cheers of hon. Members opposite. The chairman of this very meeting, the man who placarded the parish of Bingley with these resolutions, pointing out the landed proprietors as the persons who had brought misery and distress on the work-people, — this man was at the time on the point of taking a fresh mill. He soon after fitted it up with power-looms; but did that gentleman go into the market-place, and say to the people, "Why stand ye idle all the day long? why eat ye the bread of idleness? Come into my mill and I will give you work!"—No, Sir, he did not do this, but he sent into the county of Lancaster, where that infamous conspiracy had been entered into between the Poor-law commissioners and the Greggs, Ashworths, and Anti Corn-law League for the purpose of equalising wages, and reducing the 10*l.* per cent. that had been advanced upon the wages of the poor starving hand-loom weavers. Sir, I say, he sent into the county of Lancaster, and there picked up a large number of poor starving families, families who had been reduced to such a state of misery and distress by their former task-masters, that they had been thankful (as the hon. Member for Bolton, Dr. Bowring, asserted) to eat their food from off the very dung-hills. Yes, Sir, he brought these unfortunate and ill-treated families to Bingley, there to amass another fortune in another mill, and then, no doubt, again to be driven away and left to wander through the day "in search of work, in a state of miserable despondency." [*Hear.*] In his anxiety to reduce wages, he forgot the claims of the working classes of Bingley, he forgot those men whom he had excited to a pitch of desperation — he forgot that he, along with other manufacturers, had reared and bred them in the parish; he forgot those very men for whose sufferings he himself had just been petitioning the Legislature.—Hon. Members opposite do not now cry "hear, hear," and laugh. No, they blush at such a disclosure;—they tremble at such an exposure;—for this man has sprung the mine too soon for the Anti Corn-law League, at Manchester:—he has laid bare the secret of this great Anti Corn-law excitement throughout the country. He has let the working classes in the North of England know their real motives, and what would be the real consequence of a repeal of the Corn-laws,—that consequence would be the reduction of their wages,—to the same level as wages on the Continent; the filling of the mills with power looms, and the casting off the work-people, "to wander through the day in search of work, in a state of miserable despondency."—Sir, these Anti-Corn-law agitators, assert that great numbers of the manufacturers in the country are insolvent, and that the Corn-laws are the cause of that insolvency. Sir, I have enquired into the truth of this assertion, and I am sorry to say that as far as the insolvency goes, it is but too correct. The Corn-laws, however, are not the cause, —the reason is,—these men were never solvent in their lives! I will now, Sir, endeavour to describe to the House, who are the manufacturers in the north of England in the present day. They are a remnant of that high minded and honourable class of men, who raised the trade of this country to the highest pitch of commercial respectability;—a remnant of those men who walked the streets of their market towns with an erect front, and stood upon change, with honour written in their countenances, whose word was their bond, and whose dealings were as unsullied as those of the nobles of the land. There are a few, Sir, who still endeavour to tread in their steps, but they have to contend against men, who are gambling speculators in trade, and who know no bounds to their insatiate thirst for wealth, a body of men trading with false capital under the shelter of Joint-Stock Banks, many of which are themselves little better than societies formed for the protection of swindling. These men get their names entered in the books of one of these banks, they then wait upon a woolstapler, and offer to purchase a quantity of wool, making use of this Joint-Stock Bank as a reference for character and capital,—the reply of course is:—"Oh, they are highly respectable,—they have their accounts in our books,—you are quite safe." They then purchase the wool at three months credit, have it converted by their power mills into goods, and dispose of it at market during the ensuing week for ready money. The consequence is, that they have to sacrifice a large amount, not only to the merchant, but also to the wool stapler, who is not paid in cash at the end of the three months, but in two months bills. These men go on very prosperously so long as there is a brisk demand for the goods in the market, but when there is a stagnation in trade, caused by their recklessly overglutting the market, they inevitably become bankrupts:—and what scenes are witnessed in the bankruptcy courts!—Numbers of honest manufacturers and tradespeople of various callings, who for years have bean industriously saving up their honest earnings with frugal care, find themselves in one moment ruined, by the artful villany and swindling of one man,—it is no unusual thing to find that the money which some confiding neighbour had, on his death bed, placed in their keeping, in the fond, but alas, deceitful, hope, that his property would be considered a sacred trust, and administered to the uses for which he left it,—it is no unusual thing I say to find that such money has been risked, and lost, in their own private trade by speculating manufacturers of this description. Well, these men become bankrupts, but they have scarcely crossed the threshold of the bankruptcy court, before they *again* start in trade,—their previous capital had been the labour of their work people; the capital they now possess has been obtained by some friend's having been the petitioning creditor, to a large amount, under their former bankruptcies, and by these means obtaining a dividend on the sums claimed, which ought to have been divided amongst their *bonâ fide* creditors. I will now, Sir, inform the House what are the ultimate designs of this Anti-Corn-law league. They commenced their operations three years ago. At first they only attempted an alteration of the Corn-laws; but finding very few supporters in the country, they held out a promise to the enemies of the Established Church, that if they would assist them in obtaining a total repeal of these laws, they would then join them in an attack upon that Establishment,—a treaty being ratified between these parties, the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. O'Connell) was immediately invited over to take a seat at their first banquet. They there declared that the League was possessed of sufficient capital "to buy up" the landed property of the whole English nobility: and the hon. Member for Cork asserted that "the landlords" venison was moistened with the widow's tears, and that their claret was dyed with the orphan's blood,"—rather a cool assertion, Sir, for a man to make, who has himself existed for many years on the pence exacted by the priests from the poorest peasantry in the world!—But, Sir, I would ask, what have the farmers to expect from these cotton Lords, when they have bought up the landed property of the country? It is their practice when they purchase land to have it immediately re-valued. They carry the principle of the ledger into their rent-roll,—the rents are doubled; and I have known many families in my part of the country ruined by the oppression of these men. I remember an instance where a poor farmer, (the father of a large family) had his rent raised in this manner. He struggled for a few years to meet the additional demand, for he could not bear to leave the spot where his forefathers had dwelt before him. The few hundred pounds he had saved during a long life of industry, under his former kind and indulgent landlord, were soon exhausted, and when the time approached that his cattle and his corn were to be seized to pay the exorbitant demands of this "new proprietor of the soil," he died of a broken heart. His wife soon followed him to that 'bourn from whence no traveller returns.' Their eldest son, just bursting into manhood, endeavoured still to keep the family together, but the last time I heard of him, reason had lost her empire o'er his brain, and he had become the inmate of a lunatic asylum. The manufacturing members of this league also want to increase their profits by reducing the price of wages; they also want to become the corn merchants of England; to convert one floor of their mills into a granary, and employ part of their machinery to grind the corn. [*Laughter.*] Hon. Members may laugh, but you cannot deceive the working classes; you have tried to make them believe differently, but all your hired agitators have failed to do so. Yes, the poor of England would have to go down to these men in the manufacturing districts with money in their sacks' mouths to buy corn, for there would be a great famine in the land. But this was only a part of their designs: now mark what would follow. Have hon. Members never been told of the Truck

System? Have they never heard of the labourers being paid their wages in goods? Lest they should not, I will now explain more minutely the manner in which the poor are treated by many of the manufacturers, &c.; and I will expose to the House such a system of tyranny, oppression, and plunder, committed on these half-starved operatives, as is a disgrace to any Christian country. Sir, when the poor labourers go to receive their work from these manufacturers, they now find that it generally consists of a very inferior article. They find the wool difficult to comb, and the warps full of flaws. On the Saturday evening—that period which ought to be the sweetest hour of the week to the working man—when the reward of his labour—the worth of his hire—the price set upon the sweat of his brow—ought to be as freely given as it would be ever gratefully received—when the honied drop should sweeten the bitter cup of gall which the poor man has so often to drain to the very dregs—even this is pilfered from him. He takes his work to the mill, and who do you think receives it? Not the master of the mill—no; but an overlooker, who pretends carefully to examine it, and, of course, finds fault with it. He says to the poor fellow, "You have done this work ill: I must deduct so much from your combing." And the poor weavers, who are perhaps only receiving 3*s.* 6*d.* or 4*s.* a-week are constantly mulcted in this manner by these overlookers, who have their own wages paid out of what they can deduct from these plundered wretches, and a per centage on the amount. Then, again, mark what follows; they have not even the small amount paid in money,—it is paid in goods—in rotten corn—in "cheap flour;" and when the poor man carries it home to his wife and family, after in vain endeavouring to induce his master to pay him his wages in money, he finds that the flour which he had received as wages in the previous week still unconsumed, the quality being so bad, that the stomachs of his sickly children had been unable to retain it. [" *Oh, oh, from the Opposition.*] Sir, I assert that all this is true, for I have heard these statements during the course of my life from hundreds of the working classes; and what is more, they say that they have no hope of relief or succour from the Anti-Corn-law League: the only chance they have of being rescued from their oppressors is, by the landed interest rallying around them, as they ever had done, and warding off the deadly blow. Sir, these are the men for whom the landed interest of England is to be destroyed!—these are the men for whom the yeomanry of Great Britain (their country's strength, and England's pride), are to be driven from their home! these are the men who are to become the possessors of the English soil! these are the men who are ruining the character of the British merchants and manufacturers on the continent! men who live, and move, and have their being, for money alone; they care not how they obtain it; what cruelty and oppression they inflict, so long as they amass wealth from the sweat of the poor man's brow. They refuse him the price of his labour; they look for nothing but enormous profits; they declare, that there is no religion in trade; in short, they are, to use the emphatic language of Mr. Burke, a set of men whose ledger is their bible, whose counting-house is their church, and whose money is their God! Sir, I have heard a great deal said to-night, on the blessings of free-trade, and that by it alone, this country can be saved. It happened, that during the recess, the two noble Lords, the Member for the City of London, and the Member for Tiverton (Lord Palmerston) like the poor Bingley operatives, were wandering through the country "in search of employment in a state of miserable despondency." Some charitably-disposed persons at Bridgenorth and Plymouth took pity on them, and presented them with addresses of condolence. I have not a copy of the one presented to the noble Lord, the Member for the City of London, nor his reply; but I recollect he asserted, that the principles of free-trade were sound, and that the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) would have a very easy task in governing the country, as the Whigs had left nothing for him to do. I suppose, Sir, the noble Lord has been trying to prove the correctness of this assertion, by his own conduct during these last few days. But, Sir, I have the address to the noble Lord, the Member for Tiverton, and his reply. The former said, "We confidently hope, that the period will speedily arrive, when it will please her Majesty to restore you and your colleagues to power." The noble Lord, no doubt, hoped so too, but he said, "we have attempted to apply to commerce those principles of trade, which mankind have acknowledged as the only sure foundation for permanent prosperity." Now, Adam Smith, Ricardo, Malthus, M'Culloch, and other leading advocates of this theory have admitted that the subject was one involved in the greatest difficulty and obscurity; but it was reserved for the hon. Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Villiers) to dispel the clouds, it was left for the hon. Member for Bolton (Dr. Bowring) and the hon. Member for Stroud (Mr. Scrope) to become bright constellations, it was destined for the hon. Member for Dumfries (Mr. Ewart) to become the evening star: ever singing, as he twinkles, "the blessings of free trade," and for the two noble Lords to become the sun and moon, in this expansive, well-defined, social system. With the permission of the House, I will give them M'Culloch's contradictory opinions as to the soundness of free trade. In page 13 of his work, entitled "Commerce;" he says:—

> "It is clear, therefore, that in estimating the comparative advantageousness of the home and foreign trades, it will not do to look merely at the number of transactions in each. The real question is, which occasions the greatest subdivision of employments, and gives the most powerful spur to industry? This, however, is a question that does not, perhaps, admit of any very satisfactory resolution."

Adam Smith, too, in the second chapter of his 4th Book on the Wealth of Nations, asserts, that

> "By restraining, either by high duties or by absolute prohibition, the importation of such goods from foreign countries as can be produced at home, the monopoly of the home market is more or less secured to the domestic industry employed in producing them. Thus the prohibition of importing either live cattle or salt provisions from foreign countries, secures to the graziers of Great Britain the monopoly of the home market for butcher's meat. The high duties upon the importation of corn, which in times of moderate plenty, amount to a prohibition, give a like advantage to the growers of that commodity. The prohibition of the importation of foreign woollens is equally favourable to the woollen manufacturers. The silk manufacture, though altogether employed upon foreign materials, has lately obtained the same advantage. The linen manufacture has not yet obtained it, but is making great strides towards it."

In the 7th chapter you will find the following passage, referring to the following policy of the country;—

> Secondly, this monopoly has necessarily contributed to keep up the rate of profit in all the different branches of British trade, higher than it naturally would have been, had all nations been allowed a free trade to the British colonies. The monopoly of the colony trade as it necessarily drew towards that trade a greater portion of the capital of Great Britain than what would have gone to it of its own accord; so, by the expulsion of all foreign capitals, it necessarily reduced the whole quantity of capital employed in that trade below what it naturally would have been in the case of a free trade. But by lessening the competition of capital in that branch of trade, it necessarily raised the rate of profit in that branch. By lessening, too, the competition of British capitals in all other branches of trade, it necessarily raised the rate of British profit in all those other branches. Whatever may have been at any particular period since the establishment of the Act of Navigation, the state or extent of the mercantile capital of Great Britain, the monopoly of the colony trade must, during the continuance of that state, have raised the ordinary rate of British profit higher than it otherwise would have been, both in that and all the other branches of British trade."

Malthus, too, in his "Principles of Political Economy," revised by himself, just before his death, states that,

> "Since that era of these distinguished writers, the subject had attracted the attention of a greater number of persons, particularly during the last twenty or thirty years. All the main propositions of the science have been examined, and the events which have since occurred, tending either to illustrate or confute them have been repeatedly discussed. The result of this examination and discussion seems to be, that on some very important points there are still great differences of opinion. Among these, perhaps, may be reckoned, 1st. The definitions of wealth and productive labour; 2nd. The nature and measures of value; 3rd. The nature and extent of the principles of demand and supply; 4th. The origin and process of rent; 5th. The causes which determine the wages of labour and the profits of stock; 6th. The causes which practically retard and limit the progress of wealth; 7th. The level of the precious metals in different countries; 8th. The principles of taxation, &c."

And at page 418, he adds:

> "With regard to these causes (alluding to the causes of distress), such as the cultivation of our poor soils, our restrictions upon commerce, and our weight of taxation, I find it very difficult to admit a theory of our distresses so inconsistent with the theory of our comparative prosperity. While the greatest quantity of our poor lands were in cultivation, while there were more than usual restrictions upon commerce, and very little corn was imported, and while taxation was at its height

the country confessedly increased in wealth, with a rapidity never known before. Since some of our poorest lands have been thrown out of cultivation, since the peace has removed many of our restrictions upon commerce, and notwithstanding our Corn-laws, we have imported a great quantity of corn, and since seventeen millions of taxes have been taken off from the people, we have experienced the greatest degree of distress both among capitalists and labourers."

Had it not been so late a period of the evening, I could have quoted Mr. Huskisson to show that during the last few years of his life, he too clearly perceived, that the principles of free trade, as defined by hon. Members opposite were wild and visionary; he even went so far as to declare in his last speech on the Corn-laws, that the farmer is not only justly entitled "to remuneration and protection," but that "a permanent fixed duty was out of the question." The noble Lord has quoted these "enlightened men" as his authority to show that the "soundness and truth of the principles of "free trade have long been demonstrated in reasoning;" but, Sir, I think they prove quite the reverse, and I have therefore trespassed thus on the time of the House, in order to correct his error; as my doing so may be beneficial to himself as well as to the country. Before I sit down I will once more appeal to the landed proprietors of England. I ask you whether you intend to join in assisting the anti Corn-law League in their deep design of tyranny and oppression against the working classes. The labouring poor have never yet appealed to you in vain—you have ever been ready to relieve them in their distresses, and to stand by them in their necessities. They now look to you;—to you, and the right hon. Baronet, so long as he continues to walk in the light of the Constitution,—and I feel convinced that they will not look in vain; I feel convinced that they will find you now as they ever have done, their best friends and protectors.

Debate adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, February 15, 1842.

MINUTES.] Bills. Received the Royal Assent:—Appropriation Acts (1841) Amendment. 1ª. Loan Societies.

Petitions presented. By Lord Brougham, from various parts of Scotland, for the Total Repeal of the Corn-laws.—By Lord Campbell, from Belfast, for Legalizing Marriages by Dissenters.—From Robert Weaver, praying for Inquiry into the moral effects of Destitution.

CORN-LAWS—PETITIONS—THE AVERAGES.] The Marquess of *Normanby* presented a petition from Hull, signed by upwards of 7,600 persons, praying for a repeal of the existing Corn-law. The petitioners stated that the only legitimate object of taxation was for the purposes of revenue, not of protection, and they wished to see all taxes for protection removed.

Lord *Brougham* said, that he entirely agreed with the petitioners in wishing for a total repeal, but he could not agree with them, if they meant to sanction any duty on food for the purposes of revenue.

The Marquess of *Normanby* explained that the petition he had presented the other day from the corporation of Hull was favourable to a fixed duty, but this was for a total repeal: it only drew a distinction between duties for revenue purposes and for protection.

Lord *Brougham* admitted, that the only legitimate object of taxation was revenue, but placing a duty on food was the very worst mode in which that revenue could be collected. The exigencies of the State required a revenue, but the Government could not tell whether any would be produced or not by a tax on food, and this applied to all duty, whether it was fixed or levied by a sliding scale. Any duty, on food imported, not only raised the price of that brought in, but also the price of every quarter consumed by the people, so that the people lost on the whole food consumed, and the revenue gained only on the food imported. It raised the price of every quarter, and if the whole calculation that the people consumed a quarter per head per annum were to be maintained, it was nothing more than a poll-tax to the amount of the duty per quarter. If the amount of revenue, say one and a quarter million, must be raised, it would be far better to impose a tax of 1*s*. a quarter on the wheat ground, which would just make the amount; for although that would still be a poll-tax, and operate most prejudicially against the poorer man, who paid more for food in proportion to his income than the rich, yet it would be preferable to a tax on imports, for it would not raise the price of food beyond the amount that went into the public treasury. He certainly was far from approving of a fixed duty; but he did not on that account like the sliding scale, for he considered that a sliding scale was liable to most of the objections of the fixed duty, and to one or two others, which were peculiar to itself. Seeing the President of the Board of Trade in his place he would ask one question. By the votes of the other House of Parliament he saw that a list of new places was given from which averages were to be taken, several counties such as Rutland and Hereford, and Stafford, and Shropshire, from which there were no returns now, were to furnish them; and whereas there was only one place now making returns from Wiltshire, there were in future to be eight or ten. He wished to know whether those places which were not in the present list of towns, but were proposed to be added, were places in which, generally speaking, the price of corn was lower than in the towns from which the averages had been already taken? Because if this were so, the consequence would be that there would be considerably lower averages, and a tendency to exclude corn. He entirely approved of lowering the duty, and he held that nothing but the grossest prejudice would make a man deny that lowering the duty would be a great advantage.

The Earl of *Ripon* had no objection to answer the question of the noble and learned Lord. The principle which had induced them to propose an addition to the number of towns was in order to prevent, as far as could be done, the possibility and to diminish the probability, of frauds. With respect to the selection of the new towns, it had not been done with any fraudulent design or intention, nor from any notion that the averages were lower there, but because Ministers had no doubt they would be considerably lessening fraud, if they greatly extended the number of places to be worked upon. They went upon the plan, as far as they had the means of judging, of taking the principal market towns, which were likely to give a fairer view of the real price throughout the country. If the noble Lord had looked at the list of towns he would have seen that, though there were towns in agricultural districts, yet there were also towns in important manufacturing and maritime districts, where the price was usually higher than in the agricultural places. The principle, he repeated, on which they had acted was neither to increase nor to alter the averages, but to give a fairer view of what they were, and to prevent frauds.

Lord *Brougham* had not imputed any fraudulent design to the noble Lord or his Colleagues; but still the tendency might be, without any design, to lower the averages as he had described. If they selected the small agricultural towns, where grain was usually cheaper, the plan might have this tendency in its operation, although it might have been proposed with a different view.

The Earl of *Ripon* said, that nothing would more clearly show the absurdity of supposing that the selection of a number of small towns in which the sales were inconsiderable would lessen the averages, than a description of the mode in which the averages were struck. This was done by adding together the number of quarters sold, and also all the money received, and then dividing one by the other. Therefore, putting in the small towns, where only limited quantities of grain were sold, would have only an imperceptible influence on the averages.

The Earl of *Radnor* thought, that if these towns made an imperceptible difference one way, they would make an imperceptible difference in another; if they had an imperceptible operation in lowering the averages, they would have an imperceptible operation likewise in preventing frauds. He had no supposition that these towns were selected because corn was usually sold at a lower price there; they were taken, doubtless, with the view which the noble Earl had stated, but he had not the least doubt that the result would be a lowering of the averages, and a consequent disadvantage to the people. If they took the prices in the small agricultural towns, they would take the prices in those towns which had pitched markets, where the corn was usually two or three shillings lower than in other places. He doubted too whether the proposed plan would have the tendency to prevent frauds. He believed that these frauds had operated beneficially for the consumer; these frauds tended to lower the duty on corn, and thus to introduce more wheat into the country than would otherwise have come. They operated beneficially in two ways: they were founded on the purchase and introduction of foreign corn, which might, perhaps, be injurious to the farmers, but which was advantageous to the people, and by raising the price they opened a greater field for our supply. However much, therefore, they might reprobate these fraudulent transactions, the people had benefitted by these frauds. But there was another mode by which this new sliding scale would make the bill more stringent than it was before. By the Corn-bill protection was given to the arable farmers. Now, if protection is given, it is given against the interests with which the arable farmer had to contend. He had, among other things, to contend against persons cultivating grass land. Under the present laws grass-land had a perfect monopoly in cattle, sheep, &c. He saw, however, by the public journals, that it hed been announced in another place, that when the tariff was under consideration, it was intended to make an alteration in the law as to these articles, to do away with prohibition, and apply a duty They, therefore, intended to lower the protection of the pasture farmer as against the arable farmer. Thus, the arable land would not require so much protection as it now had against the pasture land. It appeared to him, that in divers ways, the new sliding scale would be a more stringentand more oppresive law, and of greater di sadvantage to the people, than the old scale, whilst it would still leave open the door to all the frauds and be liable to all the objections which attached to any sliding scale. He could not conceive why the Government had introduced this bill. The right hon. Gentleman who moved it declared that he expected no benefit from it; he said the distresses of the country did not arise from the state of the Corn-laws, and that an alteration would do no good. Then why did he introduce it? He said that agriculture did not want so much drotection as it obtained; but if that protection had done no harm to any one else, why was it taken away? He (Lord Radnor) believed that the farmers would be better off without any protection; but with the right hon. Gentleman this was pure innovation- for the purpose of innovation alone. Many who were opposed to the Corn-laws might be rejoiced at this; but why on earth the Gentleman who thought that the present Corn-law was beneficial, and that no good could come of the alteration, should propose it, he was at a loss to conceive, and he was more at a loss, because a short time ago her Majesty's Government had acted on a different principle, and had taken off taxes upon food. In September last a discovery was made that there was a great scarcity in this kingdom of live turtle. Great dismay was produced. Live turtle was wanted, and live turtle was not to be had; preserved turtle there was in plenty; but preserved turtle paid a duty, while live turtle did not. Whether live turtle came under the same category as turbot and lobster sauce, to which he had formerly drawn their Lordships' attention, he could not say, but it was discovered that there was no duty upon live turtle, though there was a duty of 20 per cent. upon preserved. What was to be done? The Treasury was memorialised. The Treasury referred the matter to the Board of Customs; the Board of Customs referred it back to the Treasury; they in turn sent it to the Board of Trade; the Board of Trade deliberated upon it; and after all the consideration which the importance of the subject deserved, because it involved the whole principle, it was laid before the Cabinet. He could well understand when the Cabinet was assembled how one noble Lord, the disciple of Mr. Huskisson, declared that this was a question of free trade, and that it was against all principle to levy the duty. He could fancy a noble Duke, not now in the Cabinet, saying, "Why, if preserved turtle be admitted duty free to feed the Lord Mayor, why should not corn be admitted duty free to feed the people? Oh! this will never do." He could conceive the Chancellor of the Exchequer looking at the duty of 20 per cent., and saying, that in the present deplorable state of the public finances such a reduction was a matter of great importance; whilst the free trade would be supported with great power by the noble Earl opposite, who would declare that to impose a duty on preserved turtle was to impose a tax upon food, and of taxes upon food he had never heard in any country or at any time. How long the debate was carried on he did not know, but the result was, that a letter was addressed to the Commissioners of Customs, dated the 14th of October, 1841, by Sir George Clerk, stating that the petition of Henry Gunter, praying that preserved turtle might be admitted duty free, had been referred to the Board of Trade, and that my Lords acquiesced in the opinion of the Board that preserved turtle should be admitted on the same terms as live turtle; that was, duty free.

The *Earl of Ripon* observed, that there was a duty on live turtle.

The Earl of *Radnor:* Would the noble Earl tell him what that duty was? He had inquired of a custom-house officer, and was told that there was no duty. The noble Lord did not answer his question; at any rate the duty was reduced. He (the Earl of Radnor) did not quarrel with this; it was a little step, but it was a step in the right direction, it was one step towards letting in food for the people; for he did not suppose it would be denied that if an alderman ate more turtle, he would eat less of something else; and if the change was to admit preserved turtle without any duty, the whole principle would have been admitted. It was a small step, still it was a step towards relieving the distresses of the people. He did not find that any other step was taken for several months, and he had to complain that one was then taken in a diametrically opposite direction, and in a matter, as he thought, of some importance. He alluded to the relief afforded to the Spitalfields weavers. He had seen a letter in the public papers signed by the same Sir George Clerk, dated in January last, in which it was said that the Lords of the Treasury had directed the Board of Ordnance to furnish several hundred blankets, palliasses, and sheets from the Ordnance stores, to supply the wants of the distressed weavers of Spitalfields. This appeared to him to be a gross misapplication of the stores purchased with the public money for the Board of Ordnance. Why should they give those stores to the weavers of Spitalfields any more than to the handloom weavers and the manufacturers of Paisley, of Glasgow, of Manchester, of Dewsbury, and of all other places in which there was distress? He had inquired, and been told, that this was not the only instance in which the same thing had been done; he saw by a printed memorial which he held in his hand, from Paisley, that they applied to have the same thing done, because it had been done in 1826; but because something improper had once been done, that was no reason why it should be repeated now. Then it was said that these articles were worthless. If they were worthless, how came they to find their road to the Ordnance stores? At any rate, it was no great kindness to give a worthless thing to the poor people. When her Majesty's Ministers made up their minds to a principle, they ought to adopt it in all cases. Now, the people of Paisley had petitioned to take corn in store there and in Liverpool out of bond, without paying duty. He did not know what official reply had been given, but he had seen a letter, signed Robert Peel, stating that the request could not be complied with. Before their Lordships adjourned, he meant to move not only for copies of this correspondence, but also that relating to the relief from the Ordnance stores, and the turtle. On the main question, he repeated, that for the reasons he had stated, he had not the slightest doubt that the new Corn-law Bill was more stringent than the last, and that it would tend to raise the averages, and to exclude a great portion of wheat that found its road here.

The Earl of *Ripon:* with respect to the correspondence upon the turtle, he had no objection to its production. All the noble Lord's jokes, however, he had before read in the newspapers [The Earl of *Radnor* had not read them]. Great wits jumped. When he had read them himself, he believed that he should hear them repeated in the House during the Session. His memory was not sufficiently accurate, and he was not able to carry his mind to the wonderfully important matters to which the noble Earl had alluded. If the noble Lord had condescended to give notice of his motion, he would have examined the documents, and would have been able to say whether there was any duty or not upon turtle, and what were the circumstances which gave rise to this important question. He believed, however, that a doubt arose as to what the duty on preserved turtle ought to be, whether it were to be taken as fish, or some other insignificant question of that kind, of no great interest except to the parties having preserved turtle. Questions of this trivial nature were not unfrequently before the Board. Some years ago a curious question had arisen. It regarded the importation of a quantity of ice from Norway. A doubt was started what duty it ought to pay, and the point was referred to the Treasury, and from thence to the Board of Trade, and it was ultimately decided, that the ice might be introduced on the payment of the duty on dry goods.

Lord *Campbell:* and the ice was dissolved before the question was solved.

The Earl of *Ripon* admitted that. The other documents to which the noble Earl had alluded, related to a graver question than the mere importation of turtle. He was not aware of the particular circumstances of the case, but it could not be denied that there were many objections in principle to giving relief in the way referred to. He remembered, when the utmost distress existed in the west of Ireland, provisions were purchased and sent to the starving inhabitants, who had no food, and no means of obtaining it; the decision to relieve arose, therefore, out of the necessity of the case. With this important subject, it was not at all fair to mix up a ridiculous question about turtle.

The Marquess of *Normanby* observed, that the petitioners prayed for the repeal of all duties on corn, excepting generally as far as they were imposed for the purposes of revenue.

Lord *Beaumont* remarked, that markets sometimes differed for different reasons. At Doncaster, for instance, the price of grain was always higher than elsewhere, because the farmers gave over measure. One object of the Government plan was, to do away with the frauds of the factors, and if that could be accomplished, it would be a great gain; but he feared that the factors would be too many for the Government, and that no plan would be devised which they would not be able, by combination, to defeat. The true mode of ascertaining the real price of grain was, to obtain the return from the grower.

Lord *Brougham* concurred in this opinion.

Petition laid on the Table.

REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS—(IRELAND.] Lord *Campbell* presented a petition from Belfast, for an alteration of the law respecting Presbyterian marriages, and complaining of the want of a general law for the registration of births, deaths, and marriages in Ireland. The noble Lord observed, that the law in Ireland was at this moment even more defective than it had been some years ago in England. Recently, the law as regarded this country had been amended, but not as to Ireland, and the object of the petitioners was, that an assimilation of the law in the two countries should be adopted. This was an important question, but he was happy in reflecting that the machinery of the new Poor-law in Ireland would make the operation comparatively easy.

Lord *Redesdale* said, that in rural districts, the present system was not only less satisfactory, but more expensive.

Lord *Campbell* was surprised to hear this opinion. He had hoped that, after various indictments to enforce the new law, all prejudices against it had died away. He did not believe that, out of doors now, generally, there was any feeling against the change effected.

Petition laid on the Table.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, *February* 15, 1842.

MINUTES.] New Members. Hon. Arthur Duncombe, East Retford; Viscount Jocelyn, King's Lynn.

Bill. 3°· Loan Societies.

Petitions presented. By Mr. G. Wood, Sir G. Strickland, Lord Duncan, Captain Dundas, Mr. Raikes Curry, and several other Members, from a great many places, for the Total Repeal of the Corn-laws.—By Mr. Emmerson Tennent, from Presbyterians of Belfast, and Sir Robert Bateson, from Presbyterians of Derry, for Legalizing Marriages by Dissenters.—By Viscount Sandon, from the Chamber of Commerce, Liverpool, for a Fixed Duty on the Import of Corn.—By Mr. Masterman, from the Ward of Billingsgate, and by Mr. B. Wood, from Parties in Southwark and Surrey, for the redemption of the Tolls on Waterloo, Southwark, and Vauxhall Bridges.—From Dundalk, for promotion of Railways in Ireland; from Belfast, regarding the Butter Trade.

COLONIAL BISHOPS.] Sir C. *Napier* begged to ask the noble Lord the Secretary for the Colonies if he succeeded in establishing three bishoprics in the Leeward Islands, where he intended that the bishops should live?

Lord *Stanley* said, that it was proposed that their residences should be at Barbadoes, Demerara, and Antigua, though the act would not contain any provision upon this subject.

SUGAR DUTIES.] Mr. *Grantley Berkeley* wished to inquire of the noble lord the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether there was any intention on the part of the government to introduce any measure for the alteration of the sugar duties?

Lord *Stanley* said, that, if this were a subject which properly belonged to the department of the government to which he belonged, which it did not, he was sure the hon. Member would perceive the impropriety of his now giving an answer to the question which he had just put. The subject was of the greatest possible importance, and on that account it would be far more convenient to suffer the question to be brought before the House by his right hon. Friend near him, in the financial statement which he would have hereafter to make, than for him to enter into a statement of the intentions of the government in reference to it at the present time.

PRESBYTERIAN MARRIAGES—(IRELAND).] Colonel *Rawdon* wished to ask two questions of the noble Lord the Secretary for Ireland, upon a subject which had created an intense interest throughout the north of Ireland. He wished to ask whether the noble Lord could afford the House any information with regard to the period at which the bill, which the Government had stated their intention to introduce, with regard to the marriages of Presbyterians and Episcopalians, might be expected to be laid upon the table; and also, whether it was the intention of the Government to introduce a clause in the bill, which would bestow on the ministers of those bodies the power of uniting the members of their respective congregations with persons of a different denomination of religion?

Lord *Eliot* said, that it had been already intimated by the Government, in answer to a question put by the hon. and learned Member for Cork, that it was the intention of the Government to introduce a bill legalising the marriages to which the hon. Member had referred, but that some time must be occupied in the consideration of the provisions proper to be contained in that measure. He could not add anything new to this statement, except that instructions had been given for the bill to be drawn, and it would no doubt be speedily produced.

CABRERA—AFFAIRS OF SPAIN.] Col. *Fox* desired to put a question to the right hon. Baronet, of his intention to propose which he had yesterday given notice. It had been currently reported in this country that the notorious Cabrera had been permitted by the king of the French to enter Paris. He need not enter into a description of this brave, but most notorious man, or of his proceedings in Spain, but he only asked whether this man, having been placed under surveillance in the south of France, had been permitted to enter or, at least, to approach Paris? He had pretty good authority for stating that he was in that city, or was about to enter it, and that agents were engaged in preparing to originate a revolution in Spain in the ensuing month of April.

Sir *Robert Peel* begged to state, in answer to the question put by the hon. and gallant Member, that her Majesty's Government had no official information whatever with respect to the arrival in Paris, or the expected arrival in Paris, of the individual referred to. At the same time, however, he might state, that the same report had reached him to which the hon. Member had referred, in reference to this matter. With regard to the second question he was unable to give any answer. It was impossible for him to say what object General Cabrera could have in going to Paris.

Colonel *Fox* said, that his attention had been drawn to the circumstance in consequence of General Cabrera having been under surveillance in the south of France, which he could not have quitted without permission.

Sir *R. Peel:* He could only allude to the subject for the purpose of expressing his earnest hope that the Spanish Government, should any such anticipated outbreak occur, would have strength enough to resist any machinations against its continuance.

Col. *Fox* wished to ask the question as to the nature of the information in possession of the Government, with the view of refuting the report. For his own part, he did not believe that so enlightened a monarch as the king of the French would lend himself to so base a design.

Sir *R. Peel* did not for a moment assume or suppose that the king of the French was cognizant of these proceedings. He (Sir R. Peel) alluded generally to the proceedings that had taken place in this, as well as other countries, and he had not the slightest grounds for supposing that the French Government would countenance any attack on the Spanish Government. He had heard that in Prussia, in this country, as well as in other countries, certain persons had entered into such engagements as had been alluded to by the gallant Colonel, but he could only once more express his earnest hope that the Spanish government would succeed in crushing such attempt.

TURKEY AND EGYPT.] Sir *C. Napier* wished to ask the right hon. Baronet whether he had given directions for search to be made at our embassy at Constantinople for those papers already asked for, respecting the instructions given to our officers with regard to the retreat of the Egyptian troops? He found the subject alluded to in the papers, page 268, on the table, in a letter from General Mitchell to Captain Stuart.

Sir *Robert Peel* had already told the gallant Officer that he had ordered every inquiry to be made at the Foreign-office respecting those papers, and he found that they had not been received there. If on further inquiry these papers should be forthcoming, he would use his own discretion as to giving them.

Sir *C. Napier:* would the right hon. Baronet produce to the House a copy of the instructions given to Sir R. Stopford,

Sir *Robert Peel* observed that it would be only necessary to send to Greenwich for them. He, however, must decline doing so at present.

Sir *C. Napier* regarded the directions sent to Constantinople to be the most important of the two.

Lord President Hope.] Sir *W. Rae* hoped that the House would extend its indulgence to him for a very few minutes, while he entered into an explanation with respect to a circumstance which occurred the other evening. The House would recollect that in the course of the debate which took place last week, a statement was made by a right hon. Gentleman, lately Under Secretary of State, with respect to the late Lord President of the Court of Session, to the effect, that that learned judge had not performed any essential part of the most important duty in the jury court during the last two years. He did not hesitate to rise and say, that he thought that this statement was erroneous, and without foundation, and also he said, that he did not think the erroneous statement was intentionally made by the right hon. Gentleman. He went further, and said, the late Lord President, down to a very late period of his holding his high office, regularly and uniformly discharged the duties appertaining to it. On the following day a motion was made by the same right hon. Gentleman to the effect, that,

"An humble address be presented to her Majesty, that she will be graciously pleased to give directions that there be laid before the House a return of the number of jury cases in the first division of the Court of Session, from the 1st day of January, 1839, to the 31st of July, 1841, specifying those in which the late Lord President of the Court of Session presided, and those in which any other, or what judge presided."

A discussion arose on this motion, in the course of which it would be in the recollection of the House, strong allusions were made to him, and not made in the most delicate manner; that he had made statements which were not founded in fact. This seemed to be the impression which had been raised by this statement. He naturally felt uneasy under these circumstances; he might at the time have stated that the refusal to grant the papers called for was the act of her Majesty's Government, and they had refused to give them without consulting him in the least degree. As for the documents themselves, he was desirous that they should be produced, as there could be no difficulty in obtaining the information contained in them in another manner and without the slightest hesitation. He wished to give every publicity to the facts. Indeed, nothing could be so foolish as to attempt secrecy with respect to a document which might be obtained from the attorney's clerks. His attendance in that place rendered it impossible for him to speak at the time ot the discussion from his own personal information; and he felt that it would be better to remain perfectly silent, than to make what might appear to be a qualified statement, when he had so strong a conviction that what he had formerly asserted was true, and not to attempt to remove the slur cast on him, until he could clearly convince the House. He had, therefore, written immediately after the debate to the Lord Justice Clerk; and his lordship, on receiving the letter, had taken to his councils the Solicitor-general of Scotland. He would read to the house that part of the reply which appeared to him to bear most immediately upon the question:—

"You are perfectly correct as to all the statements you made as to my father. He presided in all the jury trials, after the court rose in July last, in his division; was in court on one case till nearly nine at night, and out next morning at ten for the next trial, not one whit tired. It so happens that, after taxing our memories, neither the Solicitor-general nor I can recollect more than three jury causes in all Edinburgh in which any one has sat for my father since November, 1830, when jury trials devolved under your act upon him."

Such was the statement he had received

from such high authority as the Lord Justice Clerk of Scotland, and having made this statement he would not say more. He would not say one word of unkindness to the right hon. Gentleman, who, he regretted, was absent from the House from indisposition; but he must observe that the right hon. Gentleman seemed so urgent in the observations he had made, that he (the Lord Advocate) was determined to take measures to ascertain how the facts with reference to the matter really were, and he thought it right to lay those statements before the House.

Mr. *Wakley* observed, that the other night the discussion arose on the motion for returns, which would, if produced, have set the question at rest, but the motion was opposed by the Colleagues of the learned Lord; who, therefore, was not justified in blaming his side of the House. If the motion had not been opposed there could have been no imputation on the character of the learned Lord, and it was also probable that it would appear that no blame was imputable to the late Lord President. However, the statements made by the Lord Advocate were, as far as he (Mr. Wakley) was concerned, perfectly satisfactory.

Mr. *Roebuck* said, he would take all the blame to himself with reference to the observations which were called indelicate by the learned Lord opposite. He objected to the refusal of the motion upon constitutional grounds, for he thought justice should be above suspicion, and if the motion was refused, he felt that suspicion would rest not only upon the Lord President, but upon the learned Lord. The explanation then made should have been made before.

Mr. *Horsman* said, that his right hon. Friend, who was absent, had made a statement which he was justified in the eyes of the public in having made. It was, therefore, with the view of ascertaining the facts of the case, and to do justice to all parties, that his right hon. Friend, in a spirit which he thought that the House would appreciate, moved for these returns. The learned Lord now stated, that he wished that these returns had been granted; if such was his impression at the time, he (Mr. Horsman) was surprised that the learned Lord did not express himself to that effect, and he was still more surprised when he found the learned Lord had voted against the production of these returns.

CORN-LAWS—MINISTERIAL PLAN—ADJOURNED PROCEEDINGS — (SECOND DAY).] On the motion of Sir R. Peel the Order of the day for the adjourned debate was read.

Sir *William Clay* might as well commence what he had to state to the House, by at once confessing his inability to reply to the speech of the hon. Member for Knaresborough; even had he the ability he should not have the inclination to do so. He would not willingly do any thing which could damp the ardour of that hon. Gentleman, any thing which should check him in his career, and thereby deprive the House of the amusement that career was sure to afford, or the party to which he (Sir William Clay) had the honour to belong, of the advantage of the hon. Gentleman's hostility. He turned with satisfaction to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, the Vice-President of the Board of Trade,—a speech which needed not the contrast afforded by that to which he had just alluded, to enable all who heard it, justly to appreciate the talent, courtesy, and moderation it displayed. He (Sir W. Clay) thought the conclusions at which the right hon. Gentleman arrived unfounded, he trusted to prove to the House that they were so; but that was most assuredly to be attributed to the untenable nature of the position he had to maintain, and not to any defect of ability in him who made the attempt. Before replying, however, to the right hon. Gentleman, he would refer for a moment to the speech of the right hon. Baronet, on introducing the motion, the amendment to which they were now discussing. That speech, unlike all others, he had ever heard from the right hon. Baronet, was more remarkable for its omissions than for what it contained, affording far less matter for reflection, by what was, than by what was not, to be found in it. Those omissions indeed were so remarkable in a carefully digested speech by the first Minister of the Crown,—introductory of a motion of such moment, and under very grave and anxious circumstances, that it was impossible, looking at the great abilities of the right hon. Baronet, his eminent skill as a debater, and his well known prudence, not to feel satisfied that the points he had abstained from defending, were incapable of defence. The currency for instance. The right hon.

Baronet could not be ignorant that there was an all but universal opinion among the men best acquainted with that subject, whether theoretically or practically, among the best informed commercial men, the profoundest thinkers, and the ablest writers, that the existing Corn-laws, did injuriously affect the currency,—did mainly tend to produce those fluctuations in its amount,—those alternations of expansion and contraction, which we had of late years so frequently witnessed; and which, by their consequences, spread bankruptcy and ruin through the land. The right hon. Baronet could not but be aware of the prevalence of this opinion; he was bound either to show, that it was false, or that his proposed modification of the Corn-laws would remedy the evil. He did neither: indeed, he (Sir W. Clay) believed, that in a speech of three hours duration he did not even once mention the subject. Again, it was charged against the Corn-laws, that they went far to prevent all sound and wholesome commercial relation between this and other countries, that they rendered dangerous and uncertain, and greatly reduced in amount the trade between this country and the corn growing countries of Europe which would otherwise be our best customers, whilst with America they prevented a trade in corn altogether, that they thus converted customers into rivals, friends into enemies. The impression to this effect was universal among the manufacturing and commercial classes; proof of its truth was understood to have been recently brought under the notice of the right hon. Gentleman. Did he allude to it in his speech? Did he attempt to show that the change he proposed would be sufficient to relieve our trading intercourse with other countries from the embarrassments created by the present laws? No, he was silent; and his silence, where he beyond all doubt, would so gladly have spoken, could he have afforded consolation or held out hope, spoke volumes, and was of itself sufficiently significant. But perhaps the most remarkable of the right hon. Baronet's omissions, was his omission of all notice of Mr. Meek's report, a gentleman expressly sent out by himself to obtain "information concerning the cost and supply of agricultural produce in several parts of northern Europe." Rumours of this mission had got abroad prior to the assembling of Parliament. The adherents of the right hon. Gentleman out of doors had said, "Ah; you see our chief is not going to do business in the hasty unworkmanlike style of the late men—he will bring forward no crude undigested measures—see the pains he takes to procure information—he is not content with all the blue books we have already on corn—he has sent his own agent to collect facts and to furnish unanswerable data for a new Corn-law." The House and the public were on tiptoe with expectation; Mr. Meek's report is laid on the Table—of course the right hon. Gentleman refers to its details as the basis of his calculation of the protecting duty, it would be necessary or wise to place on corn—not in a single sentence does he allude to it, and from the right hon. Gentleman's speech, the world would never have been aware of the pains he had taken to procure information, or even that such a personas Mr. Meek was in existence. Seriously, there was but one mode of accounting for this omission, namely, that Mr. Meek's report took away every shadow of justification for the scale of protection which the right hon. Gentleman proposed to give to the agricultural interest, by showing beyond the possibility of doubt, that the British agriculturist, if his energies were not cramped and his capital misdirected by the effects of monopoly, could successfully compete probably without, but certainly with, a moderate fixed duty, with the foreign grower of corn. He now turned to the speech of the right hon. the Vice President of the Board of Trade. That right hon. Gentleman boldly faced the difficulties which the right hon. Member for Tamworth had shrunk from meeting—but he (Sir W. Clay) doubted whether the discretion of the right hon. Baronet was not better advised than the valour of the right hon. the Vice-President. The right hon. Gentleman had assumed throughout his speech, that the question was between the sliding-scale and a fixed duty of 8*s*., the question raised by the noble Lord's amendment might certainly be said to be between a fixed duty and a sliding-scale, but the noble Lord gave no authority in his speech for saying what was the fixed duty he had in view. He indicated the principles on which it should be calculated but did not name the rate. He said it ought to cover the exclusive burthens borne by the agricultural interest, if any such there were. Now he (Sir W. Clay) was quite sure, that any such calculation would not result in a duty of 8*s*. When in 1837, he moved the repeal of the Corn-laws, he had looked very carefully into this subject, and being really anxious to find a justification of the duty of 5*s.* the quarter on wheat, which for the sake of conciliation (being no great believer himself in the necessity of any duty for the protection of agriculture), he meant to propose, he could not (and that was prior to the Tithe Commutation Act) make out any exclusive burthens borne by the landed interest to nearly the extent of 5*s.* per quarter. The noble Lord, had stated another ground for the imposition of a protecting duty, namely, the danger which might attend too sudden a change affecting so large a mass of capital, and so great an amount of labour. This ground for protection was less capable of exact estimation, he (Sir W. Clay) did not rate it highly, he had no means of knowing at what rate it was estimated by the noble Lord, nor knowing whether he still thought that 8*s.* would be a fair amount of duty. He meant only to remind the right hon. Gentleman and the House, that a rate which his noble Friend and his colleagues might properly and fairly have proposed as a compromise between contending interests last year, did not of necessity preclude them to all future time, from taking a new view of the amount of protection it would be just and wise to give to the landed interest. He was however, content to meet the right hon. Gentleman on his own ground, and to argue this question as between an 8*s.* duty and a sliding scale. There was one feature in the right hon. Gentleman's speech, which he thought must have struck other Gentlemen as forcibly as himself, namely, that whilst he carefully disclaimed all similarity of principle between the proposed and the existing Corn-laws, the arguments used by him, as well indeed as by the right hon. Baronet, completely proved an identity of principle between the two. The reasoning of both being so completely a defence of the existing laws, that he should think it must often have occurred to their agricultural supporters why, if those laws were so good and they asked for no change any change should be attempted. Fluctuation of price for instance.—The right hon. Gentleman argued, not that the new laws would not cause fluctuation, but that the existing laws had no such tendency—that was a bold proposition. The Corn-laws not only produced fluctuation of price by the irregular and capricious mode in which they permitted the introduction of foreign corn, but by tempting the farmer by the expectation of high prices to sow a greater breadth of any particular grain than he otherwise would, and the increased breadth of growth coinciding with favourable seasons, produced, a depression of price, to be succeeded, of course, from an inevitable re-action, by a corresponding advance. The right hon. Gentleman would find abundant proof of this fact in the evidence given before the Committee of 1836. He would only trouble the House with the evidence of one witness:—Thomas Bowyer, farmer and maltster, of Buckden, Huntingdonshire, says,

> "There has been a great increase in the produce of wheat in our neighbourhood; but even now, from the relative prices of wheat and barley, one-seventh less wheat sown this year and considerably more barley. From 1833 to 1836, little but wheat grown on strong clay soils, farmers have thus gone into an extreme of wheat growing because it paid them best in former years. The old system, many years ago, was, as many acres of barley as of wheat; now we sow three acres of wheat to one of barley, on the clay soils. The number of acres lately sown with wheat bears no proportion to what it was twenty years ago, it was then, perhaps, as three to five. Speaking of wheat and barley within the last three years, there have been three acres of wheat to one of barley."

The right hon. Gentleman to show that the Corn-laws were not, by limiting the supply of corn from foreign countries, the cause of fluctuation in price, referred to the prices of rye in successive periods in Prussia, in which greater fluctuations of price had occurred, than in wheat during similar periods here. This appeared to him (Sir W. Clay), a most unfortunate reference. The right hon. Gentleman said the prices of rye in Prussia were not affected by foreign demand; in respect of rye, Prussia was a country depending on itself for its supply of grain; the price of rye was regulated solely by supply and demand within the country, and see, said the right hon. Gentleman, how great has been the fluctuations—why that was his case! The opponents of the Corn-laws contended, that exactly in proportion as they extended the circle from which they drew their supplies of grain, would they diminish the chance of inequality in that supply. The annual produce of one field would be less regular than of a whole farm—of a farm than a county—of a county than a kingdom—of a kingdom than the world, and if by a free-trade without or with a moderate fixed duty, they enabled themselves to obtain the produce of every variety of soil and climate, they reduced in a very high degree the chances of inequality of supply, and consequently, of fluctuation, in price. He had next to advert to the gallant attempt,—that attempt from which the right hon. Baronet had shrunk,—to show that the Corn-laws had not that injurious effect on the currency which had been attributed to them, and that the change to a fixed duty would not tend to make the currency more secure. His argument was this. If you had an open trade, and every year, instead of consuming 20,000,000 quarters of home grown wheat, consumed 18,000,000 of home grown and 2,000,000 of foreign, you would still be subject to the effect of years of short growth, such as the last four, and would want an additional 2½ millions of quarters per annum,—and the payment for this extra quantity must as now be in gold, and would equally, as at present, derange your currency. The fallacy into which the right hon. Gentleman had fallen, arose from his not having observed the vast difference between creating or only extending a market for our manufactures. At present we were in the former predicament. After a long interval perhaps, during which the Corn-laws have suspended all trade in corn, a sudden deficiency compels us to ransack the world for supplies, to avert famine. We go to some corn growing district,—Egypt,—Odessa,—the fertile valley of the Mississipi,—for instance,—but we find there, neither a knowledge of our goods, nor consequent desire to possess them, nor dealers in them, nor the machinery necessary for distributing them,—all which things are absolutely essential to constitute a market, and we have consequently no means of paying for the corn we want, but in the precious metals, the general medium of interchange. But suppose the case reversed,—suppose in western America, for instance, a steady trade in corn with this country to the amount of a million of quarters, and that, under such circumstances, we wanted an increased supply. In the first place there would be far longer time for preparation—for collecting and shipping the increased supply under a system of free-trade than at present. In the next, the merchants in America—would, on the one hand, find customers among their neighbours perfectly ready if they had more means to increase their use of the articles of our manufacture; on the other, manufacturers in this country, perfectly aware of the nature and quality of goods suited to that particular market. The American merchant, finding the prices of goods somewhat lower here, from a partial cessation of the home demand, would willingly extend his orders, and it may be greatly doubted whether, under such circumstances, any amount of the precious metals worth mentioning would be required to pay for the extra supply of corn we wanted. Nor would the new Corn Bill of the right hon. Baronet remedy this state of things. Up to 60*s.* probably, but certainly to 58*s.*, under the new scale, the duty was prohibitory, and years might occur, as between 1833 and 1838, when all importation of corn must cease, and all such commercial intercourse as he had supposed be absolutely put an end to. Yet hardier, perhaps, was the attempt of the right hon. Gentleman to show, that under the new Corn-law, trade would be as free as with a moderate fixed duty. It was of the very essence of a mutually beneficial trade in any article between two countries, that it should be always open, should always form one of the channels of commercial interchange, on which the merchants of either country could rely. With a fixed duty this is the case, with regard to corn; with a fluctuating duty it is not, and the mere statement of that fact, was, with any persons acquainted with the nature of commerce, decisive as to the merits of the two systems. His noble Friend and his colleagues, could they have carried their bill—might have said to the people of every country, "Bring to us that grain which you can raise more cheaply than us, and we will give you in return the articles of use or enjoyment we can produce more cheaply than yourselves. At all times, you shall receive a cordial welcome, our ports shall be open to your ships, and you shall not be entrapt into loss, by variations in our fiscal regulations which you cannot foresee, and of which no prudence would suffice to avert from you the ruinous effect." Could the Government of the right hon. Baronet use such language? No. They dare not, for very shame propose to foreign nations to give us in exchange for our goods the very article we most want and they can best produce. It will still be the fate of the people of England under the new as under the existing law, to know that there exists plenty of which they may not partake—to pine with want in the midst of abundance—and with the harvests of the world at their command, to find themselves restricted to the supply which at high prices their own limited territory can produce. The right hon. Gentlemen had intimated doubts of the correctness of the noble Lord's assertion, that the duty of 20*s.* would be prohibitory. He (Sir W. Clay) knew not on what such doubts were grounded.—Mr. Meek had stated, that the price of wheat in Poland (the great source of supply to Dantzic) was 23*s.* per quarter, the cost of transit to Dantzic 12*s.*—together 35*s.*, and the freight, profit and charges to London 10*s.* or 10*s.* 6*d.* The noble Lord said, that no considerable importation could take place until the price reached 60*s.* or at all events 58*s.*, and in that opinion he fully agreed with his noble Friend. The right hon. Gentleman would find if he referred to the able reports of the late Mr. Jacob, that he did not conceive that wheat could be shipped from Dantzic—on the average of years at so low a price even as was stated by Mr. Meek, and Mr. Jacob's report it should be recollected referred to a period at Dantzic, prior to the range of high prices at that port which the state of our markets had brought on. There was left for him, he believed, only one other point of moment to notice in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman—viz., the remarks on the noble Lord's suggestion, that his fixed duty should cease at some point of price above 70*s.* It was very evident that this suggestion of his noble Friend, was felt to be a great God-send by hon. Gentlemen opposite—and was received with proportionate demonstrations of exultation by benches of Gentlemen, who up to that portion of the noble Lord's speech, had not manifested any particular cheerfulness. He (Sir W. Clay) would frankly confess, that he doubted of the expediency of the noble Lord's suggestion. He doubted whether it would be worth while to make provision for a contingency, which would so rarely occur as wheat rising to 73*s.* under a free-trade—even at that price or at any price he should propose to maintain the duty, believing that the remission at those times would benefit not the home consumer, but the foreign grower. But, if this were not thought practicable or safe, he would rather trust to the discretion of the advisers of the Crown, who might assemble Parliament, or act on their responsibility. Such would be better in his opinion than the plan hinted at—for it was scarcely proposed by the noble Lord—but even that would be incomparably better than the plan of the right hon. Baronet, inasmuch as it might, possibly, to use the words of the right hon. Gentleman, "torture" the people with uncertainty as to the supply of corn once or twice in fourteen years, whilst the proposed law would keep them in perpetual "torture." It was impossible to conceive that the measure proposed had any other object than to relieve the landed interest from the gratuitous obloquy to which it was exposed by some of the absurdities of the existing scale. And such was the measure, which after six months of deliberation, after the admission of unexampled distress among the people, borne with unexampled fortitude — after the mention in the Speech from the Throne of an intended change of the Corn-laws—after an all but universal expression of opinion among the commercial and manufacturing classes, that their distress was, in great part, owing to those laws, and by the abrogation of those laws might be relieved, such was the measure which the right hon. Gentleman, in the name of the Government, brought forward. A measure of which its proposer shrinks, and wisely shrinks, from saying that it will revive our drooping trade—a measure which does not even affect to grant the prayers of the people for a reduced price of the necessaries of life. The right hon. Gentleman expressly disclaims any such intention—he had taken as his sole guide for adjusting his sliding scale, the average price during the existence of the present law. He says, we do not ask this protection upon any calculation of the exclusive burthen borne by the land (and most discreetly does he say so, for difficult indeed would it be to show them); but he says to the people of England, such and such has been the average price of corn under the laws you loathe and detest, and such is the price which I will endeavour by my new law, more steadily to maintain. Bitterly did he (Sir W. Clay) deplore that such was the right hon. Gentleman's determination, did he feel merely as a party man, he should rejoice, because he was satisfied that it sealed the fate of the right hon. Gentleman's Administration. No doubt, if he persisted, he could now carry his measure through Parliament; but it would be out of his power, or that of any Minister to maintain it, it would be out of the power of the legislature; in fact, the question was already virtually out of their hands. The people of England had taken it up, and like every question they had ever taken up with earnestness, would assuredly carry their purpose regarding it into effect. Let hon. Gentlemen look at the progress the question had made. But five short years since, when he himself brought the question under the consideration of the House, he had scarcely any support out of doors; now, but one feeling pervades the manufacturing districts, and is fast spreading even in the agricultural. He would implore the House to pause before they rejected the amendment of his noble Friend. It was as certain as that to-morrow would succeed to day, that the measure proposed by the right hon. Gentleman could not endure. It would last only long enough to prevent the landed interest getting that degree of protection which a moderate fixed duty would bestow. He was himself no believer in the necesssity of any duty for the protection of British agriculture. He declared solemnly, that if every shilling he had of income in the world arose from land, he would prefer a free trade in corn without duty. But he had assented, and would yet assent to the imposition of a moderate fixed duty to allay the apprehension of the agricultural classes, and prevent any possible danger from making suddenly so great a change. He assented to it also, because he was satisfied, that it would both relieve our trading and manufacturing interests, and tend greatly to render our currency secure. Hon. Gentlemen should recollect, too, that precisely in the degree they could show a fixed duty to be impracticable in the same degree they proved there could be no duty at all—for to retain the sliding scale, they might rest assured was out of their power. A vast amount of irreparable evil had already been effected. He was no longer so confident as he was in 1837, of the benefit which would flow from a change of system, or of the future fortunes of the country; but some danger might yet be averted by concession, some terms yet be made between the powerful classes who upheld these laws and the people; but that period was fast elapsing—the ground under their feet was insecure, as sand before the advancing tide; and it was his firm conviction, that if the measure now before the House past into a law, it would ere long have to be rescinded, amidst a storm of popular passion in which it might not be the Corn-laws alone which would be swept away.

Captain *Hamilton* said that a measure like the present was one which, in its consequences, would be most important to all classes of the community. Let them look to what was the state of opinion with respect to this question. On the one hand they had the great bulk of the manufacturing classes clamorous for the total repeal of the Corn-laws; on the other hand, they had a considerable party, headed by the noble Lord opposite, who were in favour of a moderate fixed duty. At the other side, in opposition to those, they had the agricultural body, and particularly the Conservative portion of the community, in favour of the sliding scale. On the present occasion it was not his intention to endeavour to combat the arguments used by the noble Lord in favour of a fixed duty. He would confine himself on the present occasion to the sliding duty, which had been proposed by the right hon. Baronet at the head of her Majesty's Government. He begged to state that he did not abstain from answering the arguments used at the other side of the House from any feeling that these arguments were not worthy of the attention of every Gentleman in that House. He believed they were worthy the attention of all who argued on this subject—because they were opinions entertained by many men of high station and attainments in the country, backed by large classes of their fellow-countrymen. But, as on a former occasion, he had contended for the principle of the sliding scale, he had seen nothing since to change his opinion in favour of that scale. He thought he would best represent the wishes of those who sent him to that House, by more immediately confining himself to the scale proposed by the right hon. Baronet. Since that scale had been promulgated by the right hon. Baronet, he had attended an important meeting of farmers which took place at Aylesbury. He saw an hon. Member opposite smile at his statement. Now, he did not appear in that House as the mere delegate of any body of men, however respectable or intelligent; but he thought the House would admit that, when a measure of this importance, materially affecting the interests of those gentlemen was brought forward, their opinions and statements were entitled to attention. At the meeting in question, the farmers present agreed to a resolution, which they had placed in his hands, with a view that he should bring it under the notice of the House. The resolution was to the following effect:—

> "That it is the opinion of this meeting that the farmer should be protected to the extent of 60*s*., whilst the scale proposed by the right hon. Baronet extended the protection only to 55*s*."

The gentlemen who attended that meeting were of opinion that the effect of the measure would be to decrease the farmers' capital twenty per cent. The farmers who attended that meeting thought that the maximum duty should not be higher than 20*s*. the quarter, though in certain cases the protection proposed by the right hon. Baronet was not as full as could be wished. An amendment had been announced by the hon. Member for North Lincolnshire, which would afford the protection between the figures of 55*s*. and 60*s*. not supplied by the proposal of Government. The hon. Member for North Lincolnshire commenced his scale with a duty of 25*s*., and, in reference to the point he had just adverted to, he thought the amendment better than the Government plan. If he looked to his own personal interests, he should probably support the amendment, and afterwards vote with Government on the general question. But he would not take any indirect course. He preferred, on a question so important as this was, looking to what was the best plan on the whole view of the case instead of confining himself to particular points. Before the meeting of Parliament, and when hon. Gentlemen not in the immediate confidence of the Government were as yet unacquainted with the scale that was to be proposed, he had conversed a good deal with practical farmers, as to the scale which they would prefer. He had seen a scale which, he believed, was forwarded to the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government. That scale was drawn up by Mr. Druse of Norfolk, of whom many members of that House had heard. It commenced by making the duty 20 shillings, when the price was under 52*s*. But he ought to premise, that the gentlemen who proposed that scale contended for a certain amount of fixed duty —five shillings—at the termination of the sliding duty. The plan he had alluded to commenced, as he had stated, with a duty, when the price was 52*s*., and under. When the price was 60*s*., the duty would be 12*s*.; and there was only one rest until the price came to 71*s*. That was the scale proposed by a person in whose judgment he (Captain Hamilton) had great confidence. But though he was aware many of his constituents would prefer a higher rate of duty than that proposed by Government—though he thought that the right hon. Baronet demanded a great sacrifice on the part of the agricultural interest [" *Oh, oh*"]. Did the hon. Member who cried " Oh," consider a sacrifice of twenty per cent. nothing? If so, he differed from that hon. Member. He believed that the right hon. Baronet, when he demanded that sacrifice, had calculated on the well-known forbearance, loyalty, and moderation of those from whom he asked it; and he believed that the demand would not be made in vain. He would not tell his constituents that it would not affect their interests; but he would advise them to submit to it, and to support the proposition of Ministers, because he believed that, in the present circumstances of the country, some such sacrifice to the manufacturing interests had become necessary and proper. He candidly acknowledged that he should not vote for the amendment of the hon. Member for North Lincolnshire; but that he thought that in doing so he should be inflicting an injury on the very persons whom he wished to serve, and he believed that the right hon. Baronet was placed in a situation which made it necessary for him to bring forward his present proposition. He was not unmindful of the distress that existed amongst the manufacturing classes of the country. He admitted and deplored this distress, though he was prepared to say that it was not attributable to the Corn-laws. When distress and depression existed in trade, a high price of provisions would tend to aggravate the suffering. But he denied that the present system of Corn-laws was the cause of the distress. The distress had been clearly shown, by the right hon. Baronet and other speakers on that side of the House, to have arisen from over-trading, from the great employment of machinery, from causes operating in foreign countries, and from other sources unconnected with the Corn-laws. Agreeing, then, with the hon. Member for North Lincolnshire, that a somewhat higher protection might be afforded to agriculture, without inflicting injury upon the consumer, he still thought that he should be doing his duty to his constituents, as well as to the country at large, by looking at the proposed scale in its entire effect, and voting for it in preference to any amendments of which notice had been given.

Mr. *Childers* had listened with great attention to the speeches made on the other side of the House by the First Lord of the Treasury and the Vice-President of the Board of Trade. With the speeches of both he was much gratified; but that of the First Lord of the Treasury he especially thought would be of great use to the country. It had been of particular use in dissipating the notions and destroying the prejudices that existed with regard to the system of averages. Both in that House and out of it he found the Conservatives constantly declaring that the system of averages must be changed—that they must be made by the sellers and not by the buyers. It was impossible to drive that notion out of their heads until the speech delivered the other night by the right hon. Baronet. He had met several of them since then, and they all agreed now that it was quite right that it was the buyers and not the sellers that ought to make the returns. But now as to the immadiate question before the House, he confessed that he could find very little difference between the plan proposed and that which already existed. Both contained that great principle—that of continuing the averages up to the higher numbers of 71*s*., 72*s*., and 73*s*., and neither could cause a relaxation as to the mode of foreign corn coming into the country. He had looked carefully through the returns that had been laid before the House, as to the corn that had been entered for the last few years, and he found that almost in all instances it had only entered when corn had reached a great price. When it entered at the higher price, the duty ceased, and there was no advantage to the consumer. He should try to explain his meaning on this subject. Corn had been entered at 10*s*. 8*d*., at 6*s*. 8*d*., and at 2*s*. 8*d*., but when was that effected. Not when the prices were rising and the duty was falling; but, on the contrary, when the prices were falling and the duty was rising, and at times when it was shown that there was corn enough in the country to supply the demand. He found, from 1829 to the present year, that when the prices were rising and the duty was falling, the quantity of corn entered at 10*s*. 8*d*. was very small. It was not more than 17,000 quarters; but when the duty was rising, and the prices were falling, there were 789,000 quarters entered. He then took the quantity entered at 6*s*. 8*d*. duty, and he found that when the prices were rising, and the duty was falling, there were entered 30,000 quarters; whereas, when the prices were falling, and the duty was rising, the quantity entered was 1,892,000 quarters. This was a system that, he was afraid, would be continued by the present scale. Let him suppose that a man had 20,000 quarters when the price was 60*s*.; that person knew that every shilling it rose beyond that, gave him 1,000*l*. in point of duty. That would be well known to him, and of course he would take advantage of it. The pressure came in the summer, and before the harvest came in. At that time the price was high, and if persons thought they were to have such advantage from the sliding scale they would hold back their corn. He remembered being told by Lord Spencer that he was deceived as to the operation of the last corn bill. When it passed, his Lordship said, he supposed that when a man had realized a certain profit, by holding his corn for a certain time, that then he would be inclined to sell it. Very possible the person would do so, and bring it into market; but, then, it often happened that instead of bringing it into the market he sold it to somebody else, who was inclined to carry the speculation further. A man who made 3,000*l*. or 4,000*l*. by the rise of price, instead of bringing the corn into market, disposed of it to some one who went on with the speculation in bond. In this way, he feared, the present scale of duties would act against the consumer as the old scale had done. It was under such a feeling as this he very much preferred the fixed duty. Under a fixed duty he looked to a constant supply of corn, and a more equable range of prices. The great injury of the sliding scale was the variation of the prices by which it was attended, going up and falling down again, to the great injury both of the producers and the consumers, and this raising and lowering took place without any very apparent alteration of the averages. To show this he would state, that in 1838 the prices at the beginning of the year were as low as 50*s*. or 60*s*., but a sudden rise took place in August, and in September it became such as to reduce the duty to 1*s*.

1,200,000 quarters then came in, and the price sank rapidly, but, again, by the 7th of December ensuing, it rose again to 75*s.* Such was also the case in 1840, showing, in an extraordinary manner, the great fluctuations and injury consequent on the sliding scale. According to a statement of Mr. Hubbard, it appeared that in August, 1841, corn was 70*s.* the quarter, and the duty was 18*s.* 8*d.*, a great deal of corn being in the country at the time. In the September following corn rose, and the duty fell to 1*s.* In the ensuing week the price fell to 63*s.*, and in the following week to 61*s.*; such variations in the price and in the duties following each other in such rapid succession must be attended with the most injurious consequences. He did not hesitate to say, that although favourable to a fixed duty, he considered it only as a step towards the repeal of the Corn-laws. He believed, that with a repeal of the Corn-laws, on an average of several years, prices would very little vary from the present rates. He was much strengthened in this opinion by the authority of Mr. Meek, and he must confess his surprise that they had heard so little from the other side of the House respecting the services of that gentleman, who had procured information so highly valuable relating to the trade of the continent. Mr. Jacob, too, had formerly been sent on a similar errand, and on his return met with a similar reception. A gentleman connected with the agricultural interest remarked in his reports, that the words were the words of Jacob, but the hands were the hands of Esau. He perceived, from the statement of Mr. Meek, that the average price of wheat at Rotterdam was 55*s.* a quarter, and at Ostend 50*s.* a quarter. Prices in the Low Countries appeared so high as to surprise him after the exaggerated accounts current with respect to the cheapness of bread on the continent. The truth appeared to him to be, that in a rich country, such as Holland or England, the price of corn would never be very low. He was satisfied that the monopoly had really been injurious to the farmers of this country. It had rendered them less attentive to their business, and less anxious to increase their produce. Wherever agriculture was best understood, as in Scotland, the Corn-laws were least thought of. Farmers in such districts, if you spoke to them on the subject, said they did not care about them In England agriculture was in a more backward state, owing to the scarcity of leases, for there could hardly be any good agriculture without a system of leasehold. He would mention a fact he had lately heard, which had astonished him much. A person in Scotland, who held a farm of 700*l.* under a lease of fourteen years, had expended 7,000*l* on improvements. The proprietor offered to renew his lease for seven years more, if he would lay out 3,000*l.* in addition, and the farmer at once consented. To him (Mr. Childers) it was perfectly astonishing that any man should consent to such an outlay on the prospect of so short an extention of his lease. He (Mr. Childers) never should advocate a repeal of the Corn-laws on the principles maintained by the delegates of the Anti-Corn-law League. He was convinced that under a free trade prices would be so little reduced as not to affect the prosperity of the agriculturists. He regarded the abolition of the Corn-laws as removing the great obstacle to free trade over the whole country, and supported it on the principles of political economy, as laid down by so many great writers. He did not doubt that the measure of Government would pass, but how long could it be maintained? Not beyond the next dissolution of Parliament. Gentlemen on that side of the House would walk into the places of Ministers, unless they would consent to come forward with a larger plan of reform. He hoped the time would at length come when England would no longer depend on her Navigation-law or an ill-judged system of Corn-laws, but look to her steam power, water power, and improved machinery, for the maintenance of her manufacturing supremacy.

Captain *Rous* said, that the question before the House resolved itself into three distinct heads, namely, the original proposition of the right hon. Baronet, the amendment of the noble Lord, and the motion *in petto* of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton. Those who advocated the abolition of the Corn-law, or a tax upon food as a measure opposed to the commands of God and the inalienable rights of man, could not consistently vote for the proposition of a fixed tax, which the noble Lord intended; while those who supported a fixed tax as proposed by the noble Lord, had, he hoped, too high a sense of honour to vote for the motion of the hon. Member for

Wolverhampton, which would go to remove all protection from agriculture, and all restraint upon foreign corn. With respect to the motion of the right hon. Baronet, he should only quote in its favonr the testimony of the amiable Nobleman who was at the head of the late Government—a nobleman, who had but one fault, which was accepting office—namely, that "considering all the circumstances of the case, the man who would do away with the Corn-laws was only fit for Bedlam"—or words to that effect, with which sentiment he (Capt. Rous) most cordially agreed. With respect to the amendment of the noble Lord, he had quite made up his mind, that as long as the Almighty gave uncertain harvests to this country, so long should there be a certain duty upon foreign corn: but if there should be a worse harvest one year than another, then it stood to reason, and no one would oppose it, that there ought to be a reduction in the amount of that duty. With respect to the opinions of his constituency, he could assure the right hon Baronet that his measure was perfectly satisfactory to all those, the most enlightened, the most respectable, and the most excellent among them, and they believed that it was founded on the principle of live and let live, and that the interests of the farmer, the manufacturer, the merchant, and the working classes, were taken into full consideration in its concoction. A French diplomatist said, that "words were given to conceal thoughts," and he (Capt. Rous) believed that such was the case in the course of the debate as regarded the speakers on the other side of the question. When hon. Gentlemen opposite expatiated on the heavenly prospect of bread being 2*d.* cheaper on the 4lb. loaf, he would take leave to ask them the simple question, into whose pockets did they expect that 2*d.* would go? Into their own pockets, or those of the poor man? The whole value of the argument depended upon the answer to that question. He had been about the world a great deal, and he had always found that the price of wages depended upon the price of food. He did not mean in new countries, but in old; and as this was a question respecting an old country, the argument fairly applied. In India, for instance, the most fertile and populous of our possessions, with eighty millions of inhabitants, the wages of labour was only 2*d.* a day, and a *valet de place* in Madras, Calcutta, or Bombay, only got five rupees or 10*s.* a month, for which he fed, clothed, and lodged himself—all because food was cheap. In France, too, there was cheap bread, but not a word about cheap wages. And yet the reason that 100,000 English families resided there from choice was because, not food, but labour in all its forms was far cheaper than in this country. In England, in 1795, when corn was 72*s.* 11*d.* the quarter, the wages of mechanics were 3*s.* a day, and those of mechanics' labourers 1*s.* 8*d.* In 1812, when corn was 122*s.*, the wages of mechanics ranged from 30*s.* a week, or 5*s.* a day, to 60*s.* a week, or 10*s.* Could any one imagine that these men cared for a penny in their loaf. On Saturday night the English mechanic and his wife had their two pounds of rump steak, their two pots of porter, and their quartern of gin to wind up with; but, if the plan of the noble Lord were to be adopted, they would have bread, an it might be onions, alone, and a good su k at the pump to wash them down with. The tradesman would be also greatly injured by it; for the destruction of the agriculturists, which it would inevitably entail, would be the destruction of his best customers. It would be the same likewise with the merchants. A deal had been said in regard of the cheapness of food, but nothing of the cheapness of labour. It was true that a ship, for instance, could be built in Hamburgh or Dantzic for 2,000*l.* which in England would cost 3,000*l.*, but then the wages of the mechanic in Hamburgh were only 1*s.* 8*d.* a day, while in England they were 5*s.* The Hamburgh artisan lived on his crust of bread, while the Englishman required his beef and beer. Then a foreign crew—good men, too—could be got for 15*s.* a month each, while their rations cost little or nothing in comparison with those of an English sailor; but our fellows would not go to sea without 40*s.* a month, and each man of them must be fed with a pound of beef, or a pound of pork every day, besides other food, and grog. With this disparity of expense, 70*s.* to 22*s.* a month per man, arising from difference of wages and food, the English captain must be clever who could compete with the Hamburgher. Last summer there had been no fewer than thirty Norwegian vessels in the river, laden with timber. Formerly the shipowners of Hull and Sunderland had to employ their vessels in that trade, but, in consequence of the difference in the price of wages and the scale of rations, there and here, they had found it quite impossible to compete with the Norwegian shipowner, and they could not longer afford to send their ships on that service. The logs, too, which used to be cut up here, now served to employ the sawyers in Norway, who would work at a much lower rate of wages. He mentioned these small matters, because they were part of the boasted effects of free trade. His opinion was, that they ought all to act upon the principle of live and let live. The boots which he wore cost him here 2*l.* 8*s.*, though he could get them in Paris for a guinea. The stonemasons who were at work at the Houses of Parliament earned 5*s.* a day; but, if free trade was introduced, what should prevent him, if he were a contractor, from bringing over 300 Prussians to work for half that money? Nothing but the natural aversion of an Englishman to such conduct. He firmly believed that if they had free trade there would be no specie in the Bank. Secondly, that the small tradesmen would all break; and, thirdly, that the artificers of this country would be involved in the general ruin, and their right hand would have lost its cunning. That was his opinion of free trade. Hon. Gentlemen on the opposite side were very fond of drawing comparisons between this country and America, which was a new country, whilst this country was burdened by a debt for which they meant honestly to pay interest, and capital if they could, but he (Captain Rous) would ask them to look at their American friends. They borrowed your money, and promised to pay you large interest. Thay sent you large orders, but how many did they pay for? When the Opposition told the House of the great defalcation in the American trade as the consequence of the Corn-laws, they forgot to add that the main cause of the present depression of trade was in consequence of the Americans not paying their bills. What was more common than for an American to come to a young man, who had just started in business, and say to him, "I'll give you an order for 2,000*l.* worth of your goods; half I shall pay for at once, and the other half afterwards?" But was there a single instance in which the latter part of the promise was kept? Never, let the same finger of contempt be pointed at an Englishman, as the American became fairly subject to for such conduct. While the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) pursued the broad path of his duty, equally disregarding the murmurs of the aristocracy and the noise of a deluded populace, he might retain his position as long as he pleased. He was sure the right hon. Baronet would never tarnish his laurels by attacking, as others had done, a poor old man with one leg in the grave. So long as the right hon. Gentleman acted on the principles by which his conduct was now regulated, he might rest assured that he would secure the good of his country and his own advantage.

Mr. *W. Williams* was not one of those who expected any enlarged plan for the settlement of the Corn-law question from the right hon. Baronet. But he had expected, that the right hon. Baronet would have taken a statesmanlike view of the difficulties by which the trade and commerce of this country were at present beset, and that he would have introduced a measure upon this subject, which would have afforded some relief. He agreed, however, with the hon. Member for Maldon that the proposition of the right hon. Baronet would make, practically, very little difference in the present law. The country had looked for something of a very different kind, especially as the subject of the Corn-laws, had been so prominently introduced in the Queen's Speech. Indeed, he could not help thinking, that the Government were chargeable with great blame for putting words in her Majesty's mouth, which they must have known would beget mere delusion, and end in the severest disappointment. The proposition of the right hon. Baronet was certainly better dressed up than the present system, and removed much of its deformity, but his opinion most decidedly was, that except, perhaps, at the very commencement of its operation, it would be productive of no substantial benefit. He was quite prepared to expect, that shortly after its coming into effect, if there happened to be a large surplus of foreign corn, a considerable quantity would be introduced, in consequence of the inducements held out by the corn factors in this country, and forced on the market at low prices, but as soon as the first operations had been performed, and when the foreign merchant understood the exact operation of the law, the loss he must sustain, would teach him never to repeat the experiment, and the new law would then come pretty nearly to the level of the old law. He had hoped, that the right hon. Baronet would have abandoned the resolution he had expressed last year, of abiding by the sliding-scale. He was perfectly convinced, that the sliding scale was most mischievous to every interest in the country, except to the landed proprietor. Rather than be subject to it, he believed it would be the interest of the people to pay a fixed duty of 20*s*., the maximum protection sought by the right hon. Baronet to the landowners, for every quarter of wheat they produced. A great deal, he thought, would be saved by such an arrangement; the people, at all events, would know how much exactly they had to pay; but it was impossible to estimate the amount of the loss incurred under the present system. To show the working of the system, he should state of his own knowledge a circumstance that would show how our markets were watched abroad. In the beginning of August, 1838, he arrived at Hamburg, on his way to the north of Germany. No sooner had the steamer arrived, than a gentleman made anxious inquiry what sort of weather they had, when they started. He answered, that for some days before there had been much rain, and that great apprehension was entertained as to the effect which it would have on the crops. This gentleman seeing him the next day informed him, that a considerable stock of corn was in Hamburg, and that he and some others had come there for the purpose of purchasing it. When these gentleman went to the holders of the corn, after the arrival of the steamer, they were told, "Oh, we have advices, as well as you, and we can make no sales at present." He stopped for four days, and he was told by this gentleman, that he could not get a quarter of corn, unless he paid 20 per cent. more for it, than was asked five days before. The poor felt the pressure of the Corn-laws to be very severe in raising the price of food, but their most ruinous effect, was their operation on the currency. Within the last four years, 10,000,000 quarters of corn had been imported into this country, to pay for which not less than 15,000,000*l*. had been sent out of the country in bullion, which compelled the bank greatly to reduce its circulation, which depressed the value of commodities and property of every description. This spread ruin and bankruptcy amongst manufactures and commercial men, caused masses of the working people to be thrown out of employment, and a great reduction in the wages of labour, which has produced the present suffering and distress. We had paid, on an average, from 50 to 75 per cent. more for foreign corn than we should have been obliged to pay, if the trade had been open. Besides their oppressive effects upon the people generally, any laws based upon the principle of the present must apply injuriously to several important interests in the country. The merchant sustained loss by the damage done to corn in the warehouses where it was stored, in consequence of their operation, and our shipping suffered in consequence of the employment of foreign craft, because, even if a merchant had a ship of his own in port, if she could not be got ready in a day almost, he would prefer chartering a foreign vessel to running the risk of not securing the lowest duty. The right hon. Baronet laid down a proposition, which startled him (Mr. Williams) the other night, and that was, that the Corn-law was not a tax paid by the consumer. For whose benefit did the right hon. Baronet keep the average price of corn at 54*s*. to 58*s*., if it were not for the landlord? What was this, but a tax on the consumers, and who were the consumers, but the millions of the working classes. He, therefore, maintained, that this was a direct tax, as much as the house-tax or the window-tax, and that it went as immediately from the pocket of the consumer into the pocket of the landlord. The right hon. Baronet had referred, as a main argument, to the relative consumption of articles of food in Prussia and this country; and, introducing his statistics with great form, he said the authorities from which he derived his information were unquestionable, that no one could doubt their authenticity, and that means, he believed, existed, of ascertaining their exact truth.

Sir *R. Peel:* I quoted Dr. Bowring's report, in which it is stated, that "there exist the means of procuring accurate statistical information." I did not speak of the accuracy of the statements.

Mr. *Williams* had taken down the words of the right hon. Baronet at the time, and they were these, "I will quote an authority which cannot be suspected; I will take my information from a perfectly unquestionable source." These words appeared in three of the newspapers, and the right hon. Baronet added, "I beg the House to remember, that the means of ascertaining the exact proportions, are supposed to exist."

Sir *R. Peel:* I never said so. The first sentence is perfectly correct; the second not.

Mr. *Williams* had taken down the words as he had read them. The right hon. Baronet on the authority of these statistics stated, that in Prussia the consumption of meat was 35lb. of meat to each individual per annum, while in this country it was, according to some 50lb., and according to others 100lb. to each, a difference, taking the meat at 7*d.* per lb., of no less per annum than 12,000,000*l.* sterling. Then he said, on the authority of Dr. Bowring, that in Prussia each individual consumed rather less than a quarter of corn, and that each individual in this country consumed about a quarter of wheat per annum, while according to the authority of the other gentlemen referred to, the annual consumption was nearly two quarters per head; and, therefore, taking the cost at 51*s.* per quarter, the difference represented no less a sum than 40,000,000*l.* sterling for England and Wales alone. He also stated, on the same authority, that each person in this country consumed 5¾ ells of woollen cloth, and that in Prussia the consumption of each was only 2½ ells. The right hon. Gentleman made these statements in defence of the sliding scale; but had he any means of ascertaining the consumption by individuals of those articles? Was it worthy, then, of any gentleman of his high station to make these statements without proper authority? [Sir *R. Peel*—"The authority is paid for it."] Well, he would ask that authority, or any Gentleman in the House, whether he could undertake to state the consumption of those articles by himself and those dependant on him, or by any of his next neighbours? Having been in Prussia, he was able to state, from his own experience, that the working classes there, in reference to the relative amount of wages and the prices of the necessaries of life, were better off than the working classes in England; and in Switzerland and France the working classes were in a still better state than in Prussia. The right hon. Gentleman had referred to the United States of America, and had stated that one cause of the distress existing in this country was the derangement of the monetary affairs of that country. Now whatever the effect of that derangement might have been on England, he happened to be in America at the very period referred to, and he certainly saw no evidence of distress there. He saw no class of people there that were not well fed and well clothed. He saw no human being in distress; but he felt shame at seeing the 3,000 newspapers published in that country, abounding with statements of the awful distress and misery existing among the working classes here, and drawing a comparison between the misery and destitution of the people here and the happy condition of the people of the United States. In that country he observed a most extraordinary advancement in manufactures; and he understood that, in the previous year, they had exported 3,600,000 dollars' worth of cotton manufactures to neutral markets whilst the value of the cotton goods imported from England in that period very little exceeded that amount. And the impression produced on his mind was, that unless we placed the working classes of England in a position to purchase their provisions—nearly as cheap as the working classes of other countries engaged in the race of competition with us, our manufacturing trade must decline, and that to a serious extent. He believed that a free admission of corn into this country would, in a great degree, relieve the pressure on our manufacturing industry; but he also believed that more than that must be done, and the people must be relieved from a considerable amount of taxation, before they could sustain their proper position in the race of competition. He could not look at the extraordinary progress in manufactures which Switzerland, some parts of Germany, and the United States had made in the last seven years, and anticipate that they would make the same progress for the next seven years, without feeling great apprehension as to the probable consequences. Hon. Gentlemen should remember that the Swiss were paying no taxes, whilst the people of England were most heavily taxed. In the expenditure of their wages for necessaries one half went in taxes. Hitherto the people had regarded the aristocracy with every feeling of respect; but they were now beginning to examine the ground of their claim to tax the rest of the community—the qualifications upon which they presumed to tax the other classes. What did the middle classes say of the aristocracy now?—the middle classes, who had always been their shield. Why, that when they looked at the aristocracy they found that they were not their superiors, either in physical or mental qualities, or in virtue, morals, or otherwise. They said that this aristocracy, who were levying taxes on the food of the people, were not in any way superior in mental acquirements to the great body of the middle classes, and that they had no right to tax the people's food. They had no objection to their enjoying their property; but they said that to create a large amount of that property by taxing food, was an injustice they would no longer submit to, and he believed the time was fast approaching, when, if they continued to pursue this course of injustice towards the middle and working classes, the pretensions of the aristocracy would be inconveniently inquired into. He did not say this for the purpose of prompting those classes to the inquiry, but for the purpose of warning hon. Gentlemen of the effects likely to result from the course they were pursuing. They could not maintain this tax without the middle classes being with them, not even if they depended upon the support of the military and constabulary. He asked them then if they would run the risk attendant on placing themselves in a hostile position to the rest of the community. He should vote for the proposition of the noble Lord, the Member for London, because he thought a fixed duty was preferable to a sliding scale under any circumstances, though he objected most decidedly to both; and he should vote for the proposition of his hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, as the only measure that ought to be adopted.

Mr. *Ormsby Gore* said that he had not been idle during the recess, and that, with the assistance of an able neighbour of his, he had ascertained to a fraction the consumption by thirteen families, consisting of sixty-nine individuals, all of them labourers in his immediate neighbourhood. They were labourers in constant employ and well off, making no complaint, and in the receipt of the full amount of the average rate of wages in the country. The consumption by these thirteen families was eight bushels and a very small fraction, imperial measure, per head per annum. For the convenience of calculation he would omit the fraction, and take it at eight bushels, or one quarter, at the average which had been assumed of 56*s.* 9*d.* per quarter. The consumption at 56*s.* 9*d.* the quarter for twelve months would be 1*s.* 0¾*d.* per head, per week. Now, how much would the duty amount to on that consumption? The average duty amounted to 5*s.* 9*d.* per quarter, which would be the amount per annum, per head; and that per month was 5¾*d.* so that the whole sum to be deducted for duty out of the wages of the labouring classes for the space of one week was not quite 1½*d.* per head; and it was on account of this 1½*d* per head per week, they were told that the tax was destroying them, and that the only means of relief was in a repeal of the duty on wheat. But the labourers were much too wise to believe this. He granted that an agitation had been got up in the country; he granted that they had issued violent circulars—formed violent Anti-Corn-law Leagues, and had endeavoured to raise, and had raised, a large sum of money in a most extraordinary manner to carry out their views. They had various means of working on the feelings of the people to induce them to believe that the repeal of the tax would give them cheap bread; but here was the fact, that the labourers only paid a duty of not quite 1½*d.* per week on the consumption of eight bushels a year. If they looked at some of the pamphlets of the opponents of the corn law, they would find that the consumption per head per annum was stated to be seven bushels.—And what would the duty on that quantity amount to? Why, less than five farthings per week! And it was for five farthings per week that they shook the island to its centre—and that for party purposes. He would read a letter from an operative in the manufacturing districts, with whom he was not acquainted, but who had written to him in consequence of knowing he had taken an active part on the Corn-law question. The writer said,

> "Consult the working man, who is, unfortunately, the greatest sufferer, and he will tell you that the great and prominent cause of all his distress has been left unnoticed. He will tell you that neither corn, currency, nor banks, can at all affect him, while his labour remains untouched, for the power that destroys his labour destroys him likewise. He knows, by painful experience, that all the distress is alone to be attributed to the unlimited extension of machinery—and its substitution for manual labour. This is the cause that has, within the last two years, thrown thousands out of employ; the same cause is still daily adding to the number, and, unless timely checked by legislative enactment, it will, in the end, bring down ruin upon the heads of those who are now so anxious for its further extension. It cannot be supposed that you can be at all conversant with the details of a manufacturing establishment; therefore, in order to show the ruinous effects machinery is producing on

hand labour, I will beg to bring under your notice a few facts connected with the establishment in which I was last employed, my trade being that of a cotton printer; and this will serve as an illustration of the whole system. I was last employed under Messrs. Gisborne and Wilson, their establishment consisting of 140 printers and 14 machines. These 14 machines printed upwards of 630,000 pieces during the last year. The printers during that period being partially employed upon fabrics chiefly for the home markets, were not earning on an average more than 7*s*. per week. Had the number of pieces that these machines produced been done by hand labour, it would have afforded regular employment for twelve months to 1,010 men at 24*s*., and as many boys at 3*s*. a week; whereas each of these machines requires the attendance of two men and a boy only, whose united wages amount to but 15s. a week."

So he went on arguing upon the same ground. He would not have risen to trouble the House on this occasion if it had not been for the challenge which had been thrown out. He had gone into the question of the Corn-laws at considerable length in the year 1840, and to every opinion then stated he rigidly adhered. The question which was before the House had been divided into three parts—namely, a fixed duty, a sliding scale, and the proposition for no duty at all. For his own part, what he had declared two years ago he was prepared to carry out at that moment. He had then stated his opinion, and he was confirmed and strengthened in this opinion by what he had seen and heard since; and if he had had any doubt when he entered the House at the commencement of this debate, what had fallen from the noble Lord (Lord John Russell) and the hon. Member for Bolton (Dr. Bowring) would have served still more strongly to confirm his previous opinion. He gave credit to the hon. Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. C. P. Villiers) for his honest straitforward Englishmanlike conduct, in coming forward for the repeal of the Corn-laws, because he believed that that hon. Gentleman felt that it was against the interests of the country that they should exist; but when the noble Lord acknowledged that a fixed duty was a deceitful intention, he found that his system was one founded in deceit, and that its working would be impracticable. If that should be adopted, the agriculturists would soon have cause to say to to its authors:—

"Be those juggling fiends no more believ'd
That palter with us in a double sense;
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope."

He, as an Englishman, denounced the principle as one which was not applicable to that honest, upright, manly, Englishmanlike system of legislation which it ought to be founded upon. Now, with regard to the repeal of the Corn-law altogether, he had confessed at the time it was proposed that he would much sooner support that measure than a fixed duty. He had hoped that this deception had gone to the tomb of its ancestors. Our home trade consumed two-thirds of our manufactures, and if they destroyed the means of the agricultural labourers, to that extent must the country suffer. He did not believe that the lower classes of this country were so stultified as to give up a ready money trade for what they might have a chance of receiving elsewhere. He should have future opportunities of going further into the subject, and therefore would not intrude further on the patience of the House on the present occasion.

Mr. *Ward* said, the House was very much indebted to the hon. Member who had just spoken for setting at rest one point upon which great difference of opinion had existed in that House and in the country—namely, as to the precise amount at which, by the consent of the gentlemen themselves for whose benefit the Corn-laws were enacted, this impost ought to be placed on the people. The hon. Member had entered upon this question, and had analyzed it in a way which was to set at rest all manner of disputes upon it in the country. He had told them the amount of duty imposed by the Corn-laws was a thing not worth contending for. He had taken the consumption of each individual at eight bushels per annum, and said that that amounted, at 5*s*. 6*d*. per head—the increase of price produced by the effect of duty—in a family of six persons, to 33*s*. per family, which in a population such as ours, of 25,000,000, would produce something about 5,000,000*l*. sterling per annum, and that was admitted by one of the leading Members of the agricultural interest as the tax which he had hitherto levied, and hoped to levy still, by means of a sliding scale. That was an admission for which the House could not be too grateful to the hon. Gentleman. He did not know, however, that the right hon. Baronet would be at all obliged to him for making it; but the admission was there in his own figures.

Mr. *O. Gore* was here understood to say, that he had said *5s. 9d.* per head, and not *5s. 6d.*

Mr. *Ward* continued: He was not responsible for the hon. Gentleman's figures; but by his own admission that was the sum he was entitled to draw from this impost. It was a species of poll-tax, which he levied on every person who was not a landed proprietor in this country, and which he told them he levied, but that it was so small it was not worth contending for. The hon. Gentleman said, that it was for mere party purposes that there was any agitation about this miserable affair, and then read extracts from a letter which he had received from some working man, who said, he did not consider that the Corn-laws were the cause of the distress in the country; but that machinery and improvement in manufactures were at the bottom of it. On that point he was as much at issue with the right hon. Baronet, as he was with hon. Gentlemen on that (the Opposition) side of the House, for the right hon. Baronet disclaimed any of those theories which had been advanced by some hon. Gentlemen on his own side of the House, and especially by the hon. Member, in the very unseemly speech with which the debate of the previous night had closed — he meant the speech of the hon. Member for Knaresborough, which went as far as any speech he had ever heard in that House to arouse angry passions at a time when it was desirable for all excitement on this subject to be allayed. ["*Oh! oh!*"] He did not mean to deny that observations of a similar character had been made by hon. Members on his side of the House, but they were outside of the House, and not within those walls; and the first instance in which all usages of Parliament had been disregarded, and the question before the House had been converted into one of mere personal attack, had proceeded from the other side of the House, and not from his. If it had proceeded only from one Gentleman sitting there, he should not have been surprised, nor should he have made any remarks on it; but he heard the most marked passages of that speech cheered in the most marked manner by a noble Lord who had refused office on account of his sincere, but, as he thought, foolish devotion to a certain question, and to those wild theories which would take us back to savage life, if they were acted on. The hon. Gentleman said, there were really three questions, then before the House—namely, the fixed duty, the sliding scale, and no duty at all; but he (Mr. Ward) would deny, that that was in any way a correct statement of the matter. He knew that much was done on the previous night to mix up and confuse those things with the question which the noble Lord had submitted to the House; but by the proposition of the noble Lord they were not called upon to decide between a fixed duty and a sliding duty; they were not called upon to give an opinion between an 8*s.* duty and the sliding scale proposed by the right hon. Baronet, for the noble Lord never mentioned the 8*s.* duty as a part of his proposition. [*Laughter from the Ministerial benches.*] No, he never mentioned the 8*s.* duty as a part of the proposition which he submitted to the House, and upon which the House was to pronounce its judgment. But the noble Lord said, that to the extent that anything might be proved to be a burden to the agriculturists, so would he give them a compensation in the way of duty. They were not called upon to give any opinion as to the extent of that compensation; and as to the burdens of the agriculturists, he himself last Session gave notice of a motion (which he should take an early opportunity of bringing before the House, and which he hoped would meet with no opposition from the other side of the House), for a committee to inquire what were the peculiar burdens which pressed on the agricultural interests of this country, and whether there were any at all. As to those burdens, the noble Lord argued that there were only two ways of dealing with them. The one was, to endeavour to remove them by a perfectly free-trade in corn, and the other was by a fixed duty. Now, he should prefer the former, because the other must operate unfairly; but at all events, the noble Lord peculiarly guarded himself against giving any opinion as to the amount of the fixed duty, signifying his preference of a fixed duty to a sliding scale, but without committing himself to any particular amount of fixed duty. But his opinion was, that the time for even a fixed duty was rapidly passing away, for if great parties on great questions, committed great mistakes, the public would benefit by them. Now, it was a mistake of hon. Gentlemen opposite that gave them the Reform Bill. If Birmingham had been enfranchised at the right time, he doubted whether the Reform Bill of 1832, would ever have been carried; and he saw no reason why the mistake of the right hon. Baronet—for he thought the right hon. Baronet had made a great mistake in proposing his present scheme—should not end in the same way as the mistake of hon. Gentlemen opposite in 1831 had ended with regard to reform —namely, by giving them a total repeal of all duty on the importation of food, because hon. Gentlemen opposite did not choose to agree to that which they might have gained with the concurrence of all parties. He was very much of opinion, that on future discussions of this subject they should have the Birmingham reform acted over again with regard to the Corn-laws. But he did not like that perpetual agitation of great questions. [*Cries of "Oh, oh!" and laughter.*] Hon. Gentlemen seemed to think that he must have a positive interest in agitation, when he really had none; but he said distinctly, that he went down to that House on Wednesday last with a very foolish faith certainly in the right hon. Baronet, and disposed to believe that he was going to make such a proposition as he (Mr. Ward) could consent to, and which might have settled this question for some years at least, with the concurrence of all parties in that House. His constituents had laid on the Table of that House, one of the most reasonable petitions that had been presented on this subject, and with the largest number of signatures, but they had left him perfectly free to take such course with regard to it as he should think proper; and his hope was, that the right hon. Baronet might have made a proposition which would have enabled him to say to his constituents it was likely to prove a great alleviation of the distress and difficulties of the country. When they talked of continuing privileges, and the protection enjoyed by one particular class in this country, they ought to have some very strong public grounds to rest upon; they must not have a positive tax justified by vague reasons. They must have something better than the prescription of 140 years, which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newark, talked of on the previous night; they must have some better ground than that for the protection of a 20*s.* duty on foreign wheat. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newark, in the singularly able and lucid speech with which he had favoured the House on the previous evening, had endeavoured to show that the sliding scale was a great security against the fluctuations of price, and tried to prove it by the example of Prussia, where the price of rye had fluctuated more than the price of corn in this country; and he seemed to regard as a mania the opinion of a man of very great acuteness, he meant Mr. Wilson, that the Corn-laws could add to the fluctuations of prices in this country, and so aggravate the evils which they were intended to regulate. He had been induced by those observations to refer to the work of Mr. Wilson, and he confessed he went entirely with that Gentleman in his arguments, for he thought that the Corn-laws, if not the sole, had been one of the many causes of the fluctuation which had existed; and he thought that the Legislature had held out to the farmers of England hopes which, by the admission of the right hon. Baronet, it was impossible for any legislative act to realize. The farmers had been led on by the most fallacious supposition; they had brought into cultivation for corn land which ought never to have been cultivated; they had sown guineas and reaped only shillings, and so they had gone on from year to year; then came the years 1828 and 1829, and the excessive high prices of that period tended to produce an extent of cultivation which absolutely ruined the farmers by the excess of their own produce. Mr. Wilson said,—

> "We have already seen how the high prices of 1817 and 1818, of 1828 and 1829, accompanied by prohibitory enactments to secure their continuance, had the effect of increasing the production and supplies; now it is clear this increase could only have been accomplished by a greatly-increased application of labour and capital, in reducing poor lands into cultivation, and in forcing the productiveness of those already in cultivation. This was all done by the farmer, stimulated by the natural hope of securing the high prices which the Legislature in effect promised should be permanent; a natural competition arose for farms, and the rents accordingly advanced;—the farmer went on year after year improving and cultivating, but he found that year after year the prices were lowering. With a view of paying his enhanced rent and his increased expenses, he pressed his production further and further, to make up in quantity what he lost in price.

His efforts, however, only recoiled upon himself; his increased quantity only produced greater and greater depression, until he arrived at the points of 1822 and 1835. He now found, that all along the object of his pursuit had eluded his grasp, and that to go on would only have sunk him deeper and deeper in losses; that the investment of capital—that the extraordinary application of skill and labour to secure what had been held out to him at the commencement of his efforts as the sure reward of his industry and enterprise—had all ended in losses and disappointments, and, in many cases, in utter ruin and despair."

And afterwards Mr. Wilson went on to say,—

"It will be seen, therefore, that while the English grower, by the operation of these laws, secures to himself the supply of the whole of Great Britain when the prices are ruinously low, he compels the foreign grower to hoard up his surplus produce until a scarcity arrives; and then the English farmer, having only a very limited quantity to sell, allows the foreign grower to participate in all the advantages of the high prices. It is, therefore, so ingeniously contrived, that when prices are high, the English grower shall be only to a very limited extent advantaged thereby, and when prices are low, the whole loss and ruin shall devolve upon him."

He entirely went with the writer in his arguments, for by some fallacious means the farmers had been led on by the hope that high prices would be permanent, and great competition had arisen for farms. He knew something about it; and he would ask hon. Gentlemen opposite whether, if they had any farm to let, there was any want of tenants; and whether, on the contrary, they had not been placed in a difficulty in choosing between the different applicants. To whatever extent they got rid of that false stimulus, he would say, that the scheme of the right hon. Baronet, or any modification of the sliding scale, would be good; but it was unjustifiable on the part of the Legislature to hold out hopes and expectations which they never could realize. But, as the right hon. Baronet justly observed the other night, the Corn-laws, as they had hitherto stood on our statute-book, had not prevented the variation of prices, whilst the highest duty amounted to a prohibition; and the right hon. Baronet had, in the scheme which he had just laid before the House, simply adopted a well-known principle in mechanics—namely, that he did not waste his powers. The right hon. Gentleman had found out, after fifteen years, that there was a great waste of power in the former bills. The duty of 38*s*. was a thing which was never realized; it was never paid, and hon. Members must all remember when the right hon. Baronet came to that alarming sound of 20*s*., the look with which he turned round to the hon. Gentlemen about him, as much as to say, "It's quite useless to ask for any more." He well remembered it, because the right hon. Baronet spoke under considerable nervousness and anxiety, and very natural was it that he should do so, considering the very sulky ratification of his proposal which was given by the hon. Gentlemen around him. The right hon. Baronet disappointed them; but he reasoned better than they. He told them, it was useless to waste power—it was useless to incur, as the right hon. Member for Newark had said on the previous night, a surplusage of odium; and therefore he had fixed upon the point of 20*s*. for his *maximum* duty. Taking credit, therefore, for his liberality, the right hon. Baronet had virtually left the prohibition as high as ever. Now, the farmers looked to two things only. First, to the intentions of the Government; and secondly, to the machinery whereby foreign competition was to be excluded by this bill. What, were, then, the intentions of the Government? The right hon. Gentleman, the Vice-President of the Board of Trade, told the House last night, that the intention of the Government was to secure to the English agriculturist the possession (the sole possession—the word "monopoly" was avoided, but the thing implied was the sole possession and monopoly) of the home market, "whenever the state of the market itself proved their ability to supply it." This was a most unintelligible proposition. He defied anybody to extract a definite idea from it. Now, however, he would come to the machinery of the bill, the object of which had been thus described by the Vice-President of the Board of Trade. But certainly the speech of the right hon. Baronet, the other night, gave a most beautiful theory on the subject of price, which had only one fault—that of its being entirely destitute of foundation—at least, of any foundation that he could discover; of course, the right hon. Baronet had some foundation for it. The House had been told by the right hon. Baronet that his object was—the desideratum which he had in view was, that corn should range from 54*s*. to 56*s*. or

58*s*. And, according to the version of the right hon. Vice-President, when corn was at 56*s*., the agriculturist was to have a monopoly of the home market. But the bill deprived the country of any hope of that; the present bill operated not by allowing foreign corn to come into competition, which was the only practical check. As to this abstract notion of what price ought to be—this pretty theory of beautiful evenly-floating prices, about 56*s*.; this was worth nothing; and in looking at the Government scheme, they must regard, not the right hon. Gentleman's notions, but the machinery by which the theory was to be realized, and the way in which it was likely to work. He assured the House, that he did not wish to detain them with statistical details. Every Gentleman had the facts before him in Parliamentary documents, and those facts might be combined into an infinite variety of shapes, by common ingenuity and industry on the part of those who might relish the amusement. At the same time, he was bound to look to the papers furnished by the Government themselves, as exhibiting the grounds on which a judgment might be formed of their scheme; and he found, in the report of Mr. Meek (drawn up with great ability), the most unqualified testimony to the fact that the supplies of corn in all the great exporting towns of Europe were exhausted, that there was no large stock of corn on hand, and that if a large supply were now wanted by us, we could not obtain it; and further, that all the increase in the quantity available for importation into this country must proceed from the application of capital to canals, railways, and other improvements in conveyance, which could not be expected to advance in a greater ratio than the increase of our population; so that, as we had imported for the last few years about 2,000,000 quarters of corn annually, that was the utmost quantity which could be expected from European markets even at high prices, the three principal exporting towns being Hamburgh, Dantsic, and Stettin; he gave the probable export—from Hamburgh, as 530,000 quarters; from Dantsic, as 315,000 quarters; and from Stettin, as 250,000 quarters; further, Mr. Meek stated, that the price in all these towns would average 40*s*., and that the freight would vary from 3*s*. 6*d*. to 5*s*.—an average of 4*s*. 9¾*d*. per quarter from any of these ports to any of the English ports whence our markets were supplied. The price, therefore, it was obvious, in this country, could not be much less than 45*s*. This was the statement of Mr. Meek, the right hon. Baronet's own agent, and well worthy, he doubted not, of credit. The account of Mr. Meek, then, was, that corn could not be imported into this country under 45*s*. [Lord *Stanley* intimated dissent.] The figures had been given. [Lord *Stanley*, "No."] Well, the noble Lord could correct him if he was wrong,—the opportunity would occur, doubtless, to the noble Lord; for himself, he believed in the accuracy of the statement he had made, that no corn in any considerable quantity could be purchased abroad for our use under 45*s*. But allowing for freights, insurances, &c., there would be an addition of 4*s*. The price of the imported wheat in our markets would be at least 49*s*. But, under the new scale, 56*s*. was the point at which the right hon. Baronet wished to preserve the price of wheat. How, then, did the new scale work? He might observe, in passing, that the 8*s*. fixed duty would here have well answered the very end which the right hon. Baronet proposed to himself; for 8*s*. added to 49*s*. would give a price very near 56*s*.; and even under the new scale, had the duty been 10*s*. instead of 20*s*. at 50*s*. a quarter, he could have understood how the price would have attained something like the level desired by the right hon. Baronet. But instead of this, the duty at 54*s*. was 18*s*., which added to the 49*s*. would raise the imported corn to 67*s*. The duty at 56*s*. was 17*s*., which would be equivalent to a price of 66*s*. on the foreign corn. Without, however, going through all the slides, it might be enough to say that at 60*s*. it was, that the duty would fall to 11*s*., bringing the price of the imported corn then (and not till then) to 60*s*., giving a miserable profit of 1*s*. per quarter to the importer. This, too, according to the showing of the Government agent. [Lord *Stanley*—"*No, no.*"] The noble Lord, who denied his having quoted Mr. Meek correctly, would have an opportunity of demonstrating his error; this, however, he believed, that if he (Mr. Ward) at all understood the Dantsic trade, 40*s*. would be the price only when there was an absolute stagnation in the corn market there, and whenever there had been a demand for foreign wheat in the English market there had been a rapid rise in the foreign prices, the first indications of a demand creating a rise, and the probability of a bad English crop adding 10*s*. a quarter in no time. So that, although a few hundred quarters might be bought at 40*s*., 50,000 or 100,000 quarters would be a demand that speedily would raise the price to 50*s*. Then there was to be the new scale coming into operation at these increased prices, and adding most grievously to the difficulty of procuring supplies. He was willing to admit, that after the price of English wheat reached 64*s*. (the point at which the two leaders of party seemed to come into contact) there was a great improvement in the scale, and that the whole scale was far superior to that now existing. And he was bound, further, honestly to say, that he liked it better than the plan proposed by the noble Lord (J. Russell); for in that speech—in the principle of which he concurred—to every sentiment of which he assented—the noble Lord had allowed himself to be caught in the trap skilfully laid for him by the right hon. Gentleman opposite, from which trap he must leave the noble Lord to extricate himself, seeing that, connecting himself with the sliding scale at a certain point, the noble Lord had placed himself in a position in which he begged to say that he could not accompany him. Now, the Government told the House last night that all the great prices in the Corn-law lottery were "cut down" by the new scale. But the principle of all these sliding scales was that of giving inducements to hold out for the smallest possible duty and create the greatest possible scarcity. Now, he did not think that with a fair trade in corn there would be the slightest reason to apprehend, from any possible combination, that wheat would come within the range of "starvation" prices. The thing of which Gentlemen opposite were most afraid, was, that the price would, under a fixed duty, often render that duty impossible to be maintained. But with a regular admission of foreign corn there would arise so certain a supply that prices would never reach such extreme points. The right hon. Gentleman, however, had said, that the revenue at all events would reap the benefit, under the new scale, of such duties as those of 14*s*., 16*s*. and 18*s*. The right hon. Gentleman, indeed, had not given for this his own authority, but that of some corn traders. Against such conjectures, it was sufficient to state the simple fact, that never, hitherto, except in extraordinary circumstances, had such duties been paid. There had been only a few cases, within the last four years, of these high duties being paid. In 1833, 11*s*. had been paid on 1,144 quarters and no more; in 1834, 19*s*. was paid on 263 quarters; in 1836, 14*s*. was paid on 972 quarters. There was another case: in 1837, 28*s*. was paid on 210,000 quarters. But why was that? Because the market had for some preceding years been stagnated, corn becoming such a drug that it could be had, in fact, at a merely nominal price; and any duty could the speculator afford to pay under such circumstances. But if there had been a regular demand for corn during the interim corn could never have arrived at a price warranting a duty of 28*s*. The average duty on the 13,500,000 which had of late years been imported into this country—the average duty had been only 5*s*. 9*d*. The idea, then, of duties like 14*s*. or 18*s*. was purely visionary. Now what, let it be inquired, was the effect of the sliding scale law on the people? On this subject it was impossible not to animadvert on the scandalous levity displayed last night by the hon. Member for Knaresborough. [*Order.*] He repeated it—the scandalous levity displayed in reference to the situation of the people. There had been the most impressive admissions made by men of the greatest weight as to the extreme distress pervading great portions of the people; by none had that distress been more pathetically represented than by the hon. Seconder of the Address (Mr. Beckett); evidence, too, had been brought forward from Leeds, Glasgow, Paisley, Nottingham, Leicester, and all the great emporiums of our industry, exhibiting the greatest distress. With regard to Sheffield, which had been somewhat better off, perhaps, than other places, perhaps the House would allow him to read a short statement, showing the exertions of the working classes, and their present condition. It appeared that for the last five years, the artisans had subscribed among themselves to a fund for keeping the members of their body off the parish. The edge tool grinders, for instance, had (being in numbers 121 men and seventy-eight boys) subscribed during that period 1,958*l*. The forgers (310 of them), 4,000*l*. and upwards; the sawmakers (254 men, and twelve boys), 2,539*l*. Without going further into details, he would state, that these poor operatives had, within five years, subscribed actually 29,166*l*. with the laudable and independent motive of precluding the necessity of parochial relief; but now they found the sources of employment exhausted, and their means of maintenance restricted, they were compelled to retrench their food, to stint themselves in clothes, to deny their children education; and now it was that 3,100 houses were uninhabited in a town where, in 1837 (he could vouch for it), there had not been one unoccupied. Such was the situation of these artisans, after all their honest exertions—such were the privations which the right hon. Baronet himself had stated were endured by them, with the greatest patience; and now their only hope was in the change of the existing laws. It might be mentioned as a strong confirmation of his argument, that the only thing which had in the least ameliorated their condition, was the indirect intercourse by the exchange of corn from America through Canada, by which a valuable trade had been fostered, which would be entirely destroyed, if the Government measure were to pass, and that portion of the bill would, therefore, if it were persisted in, meet his strongest opposition. A great deal of flour had, undoubtedly, come in by Canada, giving rise to a most profitable trade, which would be stopped if the Government carried the 3*s*. duty on importation of corn from America into that colony. This 3*s*., too, let it be remembered, was to be a fixed duty. He should like to hear the right hon. Baronet explain why the people of Great Britain were not to have the fixed duty which was vouchsafed to Canada. He did hope that the great landed aristocracy of England would rise above the jealousy—the mean jealousy—of anything like foreign competition, and that the Government would not persevere in the measure. The Government had given no reason for the excessive precautions they took against the introduction of foreign corn except, indeed, this—that the "import of foreign grain must, of course, throw out of the markets, in an equal proportion, home-grown wheat." Now, why "of course?" There was no "of course" in the matter. It was proved that this country could receive 1,000,000 quarters annually with advantage; nay, that such an import was often absolutely necessary. The great complaints made were of want of food, and want of work; work could not be procured, because you would not take the food; if the food were taken we should have the work; and out of the simple exchange for the commodity of corn, would grow up together in harmony most salutary the content, the comfort, and the happiness of the people in all countries. It was said, that it was well to be careful in these things, that we had gone too far already, that "over production" was at the bottom of the depression, and the distress. And the right hon. Baronet himself lent the sanction of his authority, not indeed to the sentiments expressed at the close of the debate last night, but to the idea that the depression of trade was to be traced to joint-stock banks and over-production. Now, he firmly believed that the evil was want of power to consume. He was aware of the statements which had been made by the right hon. Baronet as to the growth of manufactures by means of joint-stock companies in 1835 and 1836. But was the right hon. Baronet aware that the rate of increase in the cotton manufactures during those years was less than it had been in the four preceding years? What had in fact been the increase in the cotton manufactures? The hon. Member quoted the following statement:

From		Number of Bales Manufactured.	Increase in four Years.	Increase per Annum.
1821 to 1824	inclusive	2,208,000		
1825 — 1828	,,	2,516,000	14 per cent.	3½ per cent.
1829 — 1832	,,	3,310,000	31½ do.	8 do.
1833 — 1836	,,	3,763,000	14 do.	3½ do.

Upon this increase the cotton manufacturers were fairly entitled to reckon, not only from the extension of the foreign trade, but also from the increased consumption reasonably to be anticipated from an increased population. But had this increase gone on? The cotton manufactures consumed at home amounted, in 1838, to 173,000,000lb.; in 1839, to 117,000,000lb.; in 1840, to 175,000,000lb.; and in 1841, to 103,000,000lb. He had taken these figures from Mr. Greg's tables, and, in matters of fact, he placed the greatest confidence in that gentleman's accuracy. In addition to this there was a similar falling off in other manufactures, as wool, &c.: a diminution, then, of 28 per cent.

had befallen the home consumption of manufactures generally, and the surplus commodities being sent abroad, because unsaleable at home, had produced the additional depression of our foreign markets, so vaguely ascribed to "over-production." Now, the right hon. Baronet had said it would be madness to dream of retracing our steps, or of trying to check the march of manufacturing improvement; the right hon. Baronet threw overboard, therefore, all who agreed with the hon. Member (Mr. Ferrand) and his solitary cheerer (Lord Ashley), and denied the possibility of any new combination of interests which should enable us to check the progress of machinery. But the right hon. Baronet had no choice, if he repudiated such ideas—he had no choice, but that of enabling industry to open new fields for its exertions and its enterprise, by enlarging our trade abroad. What then did the new scale do towards this? If it could be shown that the measure proposed would introduce beneficial modifications into the existing scale, a different view might be taken; but it was a servile copy of that scale. He was aware that he had spoken of it as an improvement, but it retained the principle of prohibition. The speech of the Premier was good against all modification of the law. The right hon. Baronet knew that it would meet with opposition from all parties. Well, if the right hon. Baronet were so confident in his own opinions, opposed as they were to the feelings of all behind him as of all before him, he congratulated the right hon. Baronet, and trusted the result would justify him. For his own part, he believed that the measure would excite political animosities, and excite inquiries of an invidious nature into the constitution of that House, and the particular interests governing it. There was not a man living who knew the state of public opinion who could for a moment doubt that the flimsy cobwebs under which they sought to screen themselves in that House were seen through by the mass of the intelligent population out of doors. He repeated that they were most clearly seen through, and when the division lists came to be analyzed, it would be evident to the public that not one man gave a vote in favour of this poll-tax who had not an interest in seeing it carried. The existence of such motives could not be concealed, and the effect of their being allowed to operate could not fail to have a demoralizing effect upon the country. The operation of those motives fully explained all that had been passing in that house during the last two years; it explained the late dissolution, it explained the majority possessed by the right hon. Baronet, a majority, however, which he was not likely to keep unless he used it for much better purposes than those to which he had hitherto applied it. That he had up to the present time grossly misapplied it, he believed there was no competent and impartial judge who would be found to deny. His measures had disappointed every reasonable man; nevertheless, he would carry those measures. The right hon. Baronet could at present carry any measures that he thought proper to propose; but, though conscious of that power, the head of her Majesty's Government well knew that there was a power beyond that House. The right hon. Baronet fully understood his position, and there could be no sort of question that he would have given the country a better scale if his supporters had permitted him so to do. The right hon. Baronet had made great sacrifices for the sake of the party of which he had the misfortune to be the leader; he had made sacrifices, and had reluctantly followed those from whom he differed for the sake of maintaining a forced semblance of union which did not exist in reality. He, for the reasons which he had at some length stated, felt bound to condemn the measure of the right hon. Baronet by voting for the motion of the noble Lord, and by supporting the views of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton.

Sir *E. Knatchbull* said, that though he could not imitate the confident tone of the hon. Member who last addressed the House, yet he must be allowed to take the liberty of briefly and frankly stating the opinions which he entertained on the important subject then before the House. His hon. Friend who preceded the last speaker, had entered into some calculations, which he conceived had settled many doubtful points connected with this subject, but it would seem, from the remarks which the House had just heard, that the whole of these calculations were a mere delusion. It was not necessary, that he should then stop for the purpose of inquiring whether those calculations were right or wrong, he should only, on that topic, make this remark, that if he and his Friends had receded from extreme opinions, hon. Members now on the Opposition side of the House, had distinguished themselves, by a far greater degree of retrogression, and by inconsistencies immeasurably more glaring. For example, the hon. Member for Bolton had last night told the House, that the bread-tax amounted to 50.000,000*l.* Of course, he knew nothing of the data on which that calculation was founded—he was not adopting it—he was merely stating it as the assertion of the hon. Member for Bolton. But to-night, another hon. Member of the same party told the House, that the tax did not exceed 5,000,000*l.* Those two Members, supposed to be acting in concert, must reconcile as they best could, this vast discrepancy. As to what the last speaker had said, respecting the speech of the hon. Member for Knaresborough, it was not necessary for any other Member to reply to his observations—the hon. Member for Knaresborough was able to defend himself, and to vindicate the doctrines which he maintained; but if any justification were needed of the speech of the hon. Member for Knaresborough, it was to be found in the language held by the hon. Member for Sheffield. Without, however, detaining the House by any further observations, respecting what had fallen from other Members, he should advert, simply and directly to the question then under consideration. They had heard an attempt just made to bring before them the scale which had been proposed, and prematurely to discuss the merits of that scale. He apprehended, that it would be much better to postpone that part of the subject till they got into committee, than to urge it forward at the present stage of their proceedings. He was aware, that it could not be strictly called irrelevant even then, and he should not at that time feel any objection to go into it, if the House would suffer it to be then decided. Still, he thought it would be very much better to discuss and deal with it in committee. So much for the time and manner of settling the question; but what had the House heard on the subject of the sliding scale? It would not be forgotten, that the hon. Member for Sheffield had told the House, that the noble Lord never meant or intended, that his 8*s.* duty should be a substitute for the sliding scale proposed by the Government. In making that remark the hon. Member for Sheffield clearly did not treat the noble Lord very kindly; it was impossible to avoid thinking, that the noble Lord did not experience from the hon. Gentleman all the courtesy which he had a right to expect. It was clear, that the noble Lord, in proposing the 8*s.* duty, did intend one of two things, either really to levy that duty, or to establish a law which it was never intended to carry into execution; but the noble Lord, as often happened on other occasions, left the House very uncertain as to what he did mean. If the noble Lord expected, that the landed interest would place confidence in his views and intentions, he was likely to find himself very much in error; if he thought anything of the sort, he would find himself greatly and essentially mistaken. No doubt, the opinions and doctrines of the noble Lord might be acceptable in some quarters, but the scheme of the noble Lord would never obtain for him the confidence of the class, which he was proud to represent; for when the noble Lord talked of an 8*s.* duty, there was no man of common sense in the country, who believed, that it would be possible to levy any such duty, or to maintain any restriction proceeding upon such a principle. They had heard some quotations from Mr. Hubbard's pamphlet, but he would bring the question to this short issue—if there could be imposed a clear, positive, and definitive duty, he should call that a far better scheme, than the plan now proposed by the Government. He certainly should consider a simple, positive, and definite duty, far preferable to any other plan, provided it were possible to retain such duty. It was admitted by the noble Lord opposite, that when corn attained to a certain price, they could no longer continue to levy a duty—the duty must be removed—and, therefore, did he say, that he gave his support to the plan of his right hon. Friend. It was said, that twenty years might elapse before corn rose to the price at which it would be impossible to levy the duty. This could hardly be the case; but he admitted, that corn might not attain such a price above once or twice in the course of twenty years, and who could tell at what part of the twenty years, that occurrence might take place? It might be at the very commencement of the period. He, therefore, should feel it his duty to warn the agricultural interest to beware of consenting to any plan having a tendency to place them in such a situation. For his part, he never could accede to any such plan. He would not agree to any measure which did not give full and ample protection to the farming interests—which did not give ample security to their property, and afford them the means of maintaining that position in society, which they had up to this time occupied. [*Cheers from the Opposition Benches.*] He would repeat what he had said—ample security for property, and a maintenance of their present position in society—an object to be attained consistently with all the other interests of the country. [*Hear, hear!*] Some hon. Members appeared to cheer that, as if there was something in what he said which could be thought inconsistent with the well-being of society. Hon. Members opposite now put themselves forward as advocates of classes labouring under present distress, but the agricultural representatives in that House felt as did the Members returned from manufacturing districts. Some years back, the agriculturists were labouring under difficulties, they craved assistance, but did they do so at the expense of the manufacturers? On the contrary, they relied on the justice of the Legislature. The manufacturers were now in difficulties, and they sought to bring the agriculturists into the same position. Under such circumstances, he saw no reason why the declarations of the agricultural interests should be scoffed at. He saw no reason why they should not meet with the sympathy so readily conceded to others. The agriculturists now wished to give relief to their fellow-countrymen, but they wished, at the same time, to save themselves from the distress of which the manufacturers complained. The hon. Member who spoke last, had said, that there was great distress in the town which he represented, but the House should remember, that the trade of that town was principally carried on with America, and there could be no doubt, that the difficulties on the other side of the Atlantic, had materially contributed to the distress which prevailed at Sheffield. He, of course, earnestly hoped, that that occasion of their difficulties would soon cease, and that sound and amicable commercial relations would soon be established between this country and America. He was sure, that that was the anxious desire of all parties in that House. Some hon. Members appeared to think, that the land suffered under no peculiar burdens. There could not be a greater or more dangerous error. He remembered, not long since, conversing with a farmer, who said, that he thought a free-trade in corn would be a very good thing. Astonished at such an opinion, from such a quarter, he asked the farmer what he meant? "Why," said he, "it would be very well if before the free-trade commenced, I could sell all my stock and lie by till the effects of the change had passed away, and then commencing on a new system, I should like a free-trade in corn very well." He then pointed out to the farmer the impossibility of all agriculturists being able to manage in that way. "Then," said the farmer, "I think we had better remain as we are." It was well known, that at present wheat could be grown on poor land; if there were no protection to British corn, what would become of the farmers and labourers now occupied on the poorer lands? They could not engage in manufactures, and they must necessarily starve—they, themselves, and their families. If there was one part of the speech of the hon. Member for Sheffield more objectionable than another, it was his peroration—it was that part in which he accused the agriculturists of being actuated by motives of private interest. No accusation could be more unjust. He certainly very much esteemed the good opinion of his constituents, much more than he did any advantages which office could confer, but he valued the public good much above either. If he desired the advantage of the British farmer, he desired also the good of the British manufacturer; and in saying that, he felt that he enjoyed the full concurrence of those with whom he generally acted. Did hon. Gentlemen opposite mean to contend that the subject should be considered simply and exclusively with reference to those classes which were employed in manufactures? Were those engaged in agricultural pursuits, and dependent upon agriculture, whether more or less, to be forgotten? He had not any hesitation in declaring, that such a view of the question would be most partial, because, and it could not be denied, people of every description were more or less dependent upon the prosperity of the agricultural interests of this country, and those who were positively so, far outnumbered those engaged in manufactures. He could not help saying, that those who partially and vehemently argued this question, as if the manufacturers were the whole people of England, and as if they ought to carry everything before them, proceeded in a manner which was most unjust, both to the subject and to the people generally. The hon. Member for Bolton had spoken of the distressed state of the manufacturing classes, and it would appear that some of the accounts, though the state of distress was bad enough, represented it to be worse than it really was. Allusions had been made also to the opinions of Mr. Huskisson, and if the House would permit him, he would just read the sentiments of that great statesman, which were, he was happy to say, upon his side of the question. Mr. Huskisson, in 1814, said, respecting the dependence which this country ought to have upon foreign ports, and he did not see why Mr. Huskisson's opinion in 1814 should not be as good authority at that date as at any other upon abstract questions of this kind, as upon any other question:—

> "Let the bread we eat be the produce of corn grown among ourselves, and, for one, I care not how cheap it is—the cheaper the better. It is cheap now, and I rejoice at it, because it is altogether owing to a sufficiency of corn of our own growth. But, in order to insure a continuance of that cheapness and that sufficiency, we must insure to our own growers that protection against foreign import, which has produced these blessings, and by which alone they can be permanently maintained. The history of the country for the last 170 years clearly proves, on the one hand, that cheapness produced by foreign import is the sure forerunner of scarcity; and, on the other, that a steady home supply is the only safe foundation of steady and moderate prices."

He had still another authority to quote, that of a late Member of that House, who took great interest in this question—the hon. Member for Birmingham. After arguing that a free importation of corn would produce a proportionate reduction in wages, he said, in one of his letters "upon Corn and Currency,"—

> "Then, you will say, only take off the Corn-laws, and the labourer is relieved; but, remember, that the trade of the country is two-thirds home trade, and the removal of the Corn-laws would reduce the prices of the home trade more than the advantage gained by the artisan in the reduction in the price of corn; that the present amount of taxes, rates, and tithes, would have to be paid out of seriously reduced means, and that a further reduction must be calculated upon our reduction of export prices. Thus we might gain a little advantage upon our export trade, which was one-third of our whole trade, and lose greatly upon our home trade, leaving a very poor chance for the improvement of the condition of the unfortunate artisan."

It was his earnest hope that the decision of the House would be in support of the view which he had now taken of this question, and it was his anxious desire to discharge his duties in such a way as that the interests, not of one class, but of all classes, should be fairly and justly considered and attended to. He would conclude then by declaring his determination to adhere to the opinions he had expressed, and by expressing his confidence that the proposition of her Majesty's Government would be carried by a large majority of that House.

Dr. *Bowring* rose, amidst some cries for Mr. Labouchere, who rose at the same moment, and begged to say one single word by way of "personal explanation." When the hon. Members had heard him out, he thought they would admit that he was entitled to ask this favour. It was quite true that when he spoke of the condition of Bolton, reading a document which had been put into his hand, he had stated out of fifty mills there, no less than thirty were unemployed. He had come down to the House, and explained the matter, and he could appeal to the Chair as to the incorrectness of the fact, that he stated that the document had been incorrectly copied, but that part was left out, and that on referring to the original document from which the copy was taken, it appeared that the expression was "thirty mills were working short time." He came spontaneously down to the House, and did everything that depended upon him to correct the error.

Mr. *Labouchere* next rose, and commenced by expressing his regret, that this discussion should take up so much time, but, notwithstanding that feeling of regret, he could not content himself with giving a silent vote upon so important a question. He might be well content to let the motion of his noble Friend rest upon the grounds upon which he had urged the House to receive and adopt it, and upon the arguments of others on the same side of the House who had supported it, if indeed he did not feel and know well how little he might hope to add any variety or force to the arguments which had been already offered to the judgement of the House. But, having lately occupied an official station under the Crown, connected with the commercial interests of the country, he could hardly reconcile it to his sense of duty to those interests, nor to express his opinions, however briefly, upon so important a question. He assured the House, however, that in soliciting from it that patience and indulgence which could alone enable him to express the views he entertained, he would endeavour to repay the favour by rendering his observations as terse and brief as the nature of the subject would permit. He had listened attentively to the speech of the right hon. Baronet who had just sat down. He had long known the right hon. Baronet in that House as one of the most unflinching advocates of high protection to the agricultural interests; and he must say, that the speech which the right hon. Baronet had that night delivered as a Minister of the Crown, was in no degree at variance with the opinions which he had heard from him on previous occasions, when he spoke only as a county Member. He rejoiced, that the right hon. Baronet had at last given to the House what he thought it had previously greatly wanted; namely, a clear definition of what was the object and principle of the ministerial proposition. The right hon. Baronet was perfectly plain and explicit upon that subject. He told the House, that the object of the proposed bill was to keep up the value of the estates of the landed interest, and to preserve to that interest its station in society [*"Hear, hear," from the Ministerial benches, responded to by loud cheers from the Opposition.*] And lest there should be any mistake upon the point, any misapprehension as to what he really intended to say, the right hon. Baronet repeated his words twice over. It was acknowledged, indeed, by the cheers of the Gentlemen around him, that the right hon. Baronet's words conveyed a fair exposition of their own views upon the point. Now he conceived, that the first object of a Corn Bill was of a totally different nature. He conceived that the object which the House of Commons—representing all the various classes of the community of this great empire—should have in view in passing a corn bill, was to arrange the subject upon such a basis as should be for the advantage of the whole community. Not certainly, excluding the interests of that which he admitted to be a valuable and important part of the community—the proprietors of the soil; but still that the first, main paramount object of the Legislature should be that which he held to be incalculably greater than the mere interest of the landowners—he meant the interest of the great majority of the people, consisting as that majority did, of the labouring and middle classes. That he held to be the first and legitimate object of a Corn Bill; and he had the satisfaction of remembering that in that view of the question he was supported by the high authority of the right hon. Baronet opposite (Sir R. Peel). He lamented to remark, however, that he thought the principles expressed by the right hon. Baronet in that and other parts of his speech were very widely different from the practical measure which he had proposed to the House. But he had the satisfaction to agree with the right hon. Baronet that in arranging this question it would be unbecoming and disgraceful in the Legislature to say, that the first or chief object should be to keep up the rental of the landed aristocracy, or to promote exclusively the interests of any one class of the community. He should be as sorry as any man to see the ruin or embarrassment of the landed proprietors of the country; but, at the same time, he must repeat that what he mainly looked to in the adjustment of a question which involved the bread of the people was the interest of the community at large. The right hon. Baronet in introducing the subject to the House, justly denominated it "a question of awful importance." In truth to a country such as England, or, indeed, to any country, the laws which regulated the price of its food, must be a matter of the deepest importance. There were, however, many considerations why, in a country where the state of society was so highly artificial as it was at this moment in England, the laws affecting the supply of corn should be regarded as of peculiar importance. Before he proceeded to any other part of this subject, he would take the liberty of very shortly calling the attention of the House to the state in which this country actually stood, and to the prospects of the country, with regard to the supply of corn. The right hon. Baronet admitted, that it was true that in some years England was obliged to import large quantities of food to supply the wants of its population; but "in favourable seasons," said he, "we grow enough for our own consumption." Now, the question for the House to consider was this—not whether the home growth was sufficient in one year and insufficient in the next, but whether upon an average of years, it was equal to the supply of our own people. If it were true that it was in bad years only that we wanted a supply of foreign corn, and that in good years we had more than enough, and were capable of becoming an exporting country, he could understand much of the reasoning which the right hon. Baronet had advanced upon this subject; but he thought that the reverse of that fact would be easily demonstrable. He did not apprehend that there would be any difficulty in proving that, upon an average of years, there was a deficiency in the supply of home-grown corn, and that the importation of foreign corn, necessary to supply that deficiency, was annually increasing to a very great extent. He would very shortly refer to figures to put the House in possession of the actual state of the country with regard to the supply of corn. He held in his hand a return of the annual average importation of foreign and colonial wheat into this country, in each consecutive period of ten years, from 1760 to 1840. From that return it appeared, that the annual average importation was, from

1761 to 1770	94,089	quarters.
1771 to 1780	111,372	—
1781 to 1790	143,292	—
1791 to 1800	470,342	—
1801 to 1810	555,959	—
1811 to 1820	429,076	—
1821 to 1830	534,762	—
1831 to 1840	908,118	—

Thus, if it were allowable to argue for the future upon the experience of the past, it was perfectly manifest, that, notwithstanding the great increase in the productive power of agriculture, the wants of the population of this country had outstripped the means of supply. Therefore, in dealing with the Corn-laws, the House was bound to remember that the question could only be rightly considered by regarding this country as one in which a large and annually increasing importation of corn was necessary to the supply of its population. He found from the date furnished in the return from which he had just quoted, that if our wants increased in the same ratio during the next ten years that they had done during the last ten years, we should require, in 1850, a foreign supply of no less than 20,500,000 quarters, being rather more than an average of 2,000,000 quarters annually. There was another point connected with this subject to which, as it had not been much adverted to, and as it had really an important bearing upon the question, he should take the liberty of calling the attention of the House; he meant the present state and prospects of the corn trade between Ireland and this country. He knew that there were Gentlemen who conceived that Ireland was an inexhaustible granary, from which the wants of England might be supplied. That, however, was far from being the case. If Gentlemen would only look to what actually took place, as related to the import of Irish corn into this country, they would find this remarkable fact, that up to 1833, he was speaking of the import of wheat only, up to 1833 the supply from Ireland was steadily and considerably increasing. In that year it reached the highest amount ever attained. According to a return which he held in his hand, it appeared that since that period, the quantity of wheat and wheat flour imported into Great Britain, from Ireland, stood thus:—

	Quarters.
1833	844,211
1834	779,505
1835	661,776
1836	598,757
1837	534,465
1838	542,583
1839	258,331
1840	174,439
1841	218,708

If the stimulus of high prices in England could have induced a greater supply from Ireland, it certainly would have been derived during the last two years; but it would be seen from the figures he had just quoted, that notwithstanding the great enhancement of price in the English market, the Irish supply had been less than at any previous period. He was happy to say, that he believed this was owing, not to any distress in Ireland, but, on the contrary, to causes closely connected with the prosperity of that country. The truth was, first, that Ireland now consumed more wheat than she was formerly wont to do—a fact which clearly told for the argument he was using—and next, that since the facilities afforded by steam-boat communication between the two countries had been established, it was found to be more profitable to the Irish agriculturist, to direct his attention to the extension of grazing and the rearing of cattle, rather than to the cultivation of grain. These he believed to be the true causes of the diminution of the supply of wheat from Ireland; but, however that might be, no one, he apprehended, could doubt the fact, that for the future it would be vain to look to Ireland for such a supply of corn as the land hitherto afforded. It was under this state of things, at a period of acknowledged distress, that the right hon. Baronet, the first Minister of the crown, came forward and announced to the House, and to the country, that, in his opinion, the Corn-laws ought to be altered. He perfectly agreed with what he had frequently heard from the right hon. Baronet upon the subject, namely, that the law upon a matter of this kind, affecting the food of the people, ought not to be altered except upon grave reasons. But if reasons so grave as to call for an alteration of the law occurred, then it became of immense importance, that the alteration should be so far satisfactory to the country, as to give a reasonable chance of its enduring for some time. He had examined, as well as he was able, the new scheme propounded by the right hon. Baronet; and he would begin his comments upon it, by pointing out those parts of it which he conceived to be good. He was sorry to say, that this part of his task would be despatched in a few words. He admitted to the right hon. Baronet, that there was a great deal of apparent amendment, and some practical amendment, in the substitution of a sliding for a jumping scale. He thought that the evils of the jumping scale had been too clearly demonstrated to need a word of condemnation from him. He also believed that, under the plan proposed by the right hon. Baronet, it was probable that the protection given to agriculture would produce something more of money to the revenue than was derived under the existing system. In these respects he thought the plan an improvement; but, he must say, that the more he looked into the subject the more he doubted whether, in point of relief to those interests which considered themselves aggrieved by the present law, and upon whose account it was deemed necessary to interfere with the existing system—in point of relief to those interests, the more he looked into the subject, the more he doubted the efficacy of the plan proposed by the right hon. Baronet to afford a practical benefit. He did not believe that it would afford to the great interests now enduring so much privation and distress any benefit worth mentioning. Before he said anything about the scale suggested by the right hon. Baronet, there was one very important preliminary part of the subject to which he begged to direct the attention of the House, more especially as he did not recollect to have heard it adverted to in the discussion which had already taken place. When the right hon. Baronet's figures were looked at and compared with the figures of the old scale, there was undoubtedly a very considerable diminution; but before the House felt assured that the new scale was quite what it appeared to be, it was absolutely necessary to take into consideration some attendant circumstances which were of a very important nature. The right hon. Baronet proposed to do several things at the same time that he introduced the new scale. The right hon. Baronet proposed to alter the system of taking the averages, by adding no less than 156 towns to the 150 from which the averages were now taken. He proposed, further, to take the task of making the returns, upon which the averages were founded, out of the hands of the corn inspector, whose business it had hitherto been to prepare them, and to transfer that duty to the officers of Excise. Of course, a great deal must depend upon the effect of this alteration. It was difficult to speak very confidently of what that effect would be, but he had been at some pains to ascertain the opinions of practical and experienced men upon it. First of all, it was to be observed that the 156 towns which it was proposed to add to the 150 from which the returns were now made, were chiefly small agricultural towns, bearing no comparison, in point of population and wealth, to the towns with which they were to be united. Now, it must be obvious, that the effect of this—persons might differ as to the extent of it—but it was obvious that the effect of this change must be in some degree to affect the averages—in some degree to lower the amount of the advertised averages. The right hon. Baronet also proposed that the returns should be made by the excise officers. It was an undoubted fact, that the returns as at present made were prepared in a very careless and inaccurate manner. He was told that in the small agricultural towns it frequently happened that the returning officer did not very narrowly watch all the sales that were made, and that his returns in consequence were very far from being correct. Could it be doubted, then, that if these returns for the future, through the agency of excise officers, were made in a more perfect and stringent manner, that the effect of the alteration would be to affect the general averages? He was not saying that these proposed alterations would not be improvements, but what he contended was this, that however much they might improve the machinery by which the averages were to be struck, it was necessary to take into calculation the probable bearing and effect which they would have upon the averages themselves. The right hon. Baronet declared, that in adding the 156 towns to the 150 towns from which the returns were now made, and in placing the duty of making the returns in the hands of the excise officers instead of the corn inspectors, he had no intention of indirectly affecting the averages. Now, he was assured that it was the opinion of practical and experienced men, that the effect of these alterations, together with the effect of other alterations to which he (Mr. Labouchere) would presently advert, would be to cause a decided reduction in the advertised averages of no less than 5*s.* a quarter. He saw a smile of incredulity playing upon the countenance of the right hon. Baronet. He was quite sure that the right hon. Baronet intended that the new machinery which he proposed should have no indirect effect upon the averages, but when he heard the arguments upon which the right hon. Baronet supported his opinions, he owned he could not help doubting the accuracy of the conclusions at which the right hon. Baronet arrived. The right hon. Baronet stated, that he had examined into the alleged frauds in the London averages, and that, as far as he could make out, the difference between the prices returned in London and the general average price throughout the rest of the country was only very slight. He did not think, that upon reference to the documents which were on the Table of the House, that statement of the right hon. Baronet could be borne out. On the contrary, he thought it was clear, from a paper to which he should presently more particularly refer, that even in the very last year the London speculators, by means of fictitious sales, had managed to make a difference of no less than 4*s.* a quarter in the London average, as compared with the averages of the rest of the country. Of the fictitious nature of a portion of the London sales, the quantity reported to be sold afforded a sufficient proof. In the six weeks, ending in August, 1839, there were sold in London 21,634 quarters. In the corresponding period of 1840 it was reported in the returns that 89,000 quarters were sold. In the former period the difference between the average price of London, and that of all the other markets of England and Wales varied from 2*s.* to 2*s.* 9*d.*; in the latter period it varied from 6*s.* 8*d.* to 8*s.* 6*d.* The effect upon the duty on wheat was a reduction from 6*s.* 8*d.* to 2*s.* 8*d.* He thought, therefore, that if the right hon. Baronet succeeded in putting a stop to these frauds, and if he made his scale more stringent by the admission of 156 additional towns, and by the employment of excise officers instead of corn inspectors—although these might be great improvements in themselves—yet the right hon. Baronet ought not to be startled when he was told that, in the opinion of practical and experienced men, the effect of these alterations in the existing system would be to produce a reduction in the advertised averages of at least 5*s.* a quarter. If that were true, the same derangements would take place under the proposed as under the old system. Now, one of the evils most complained of in the sliding scale was the evil of the great fluctuations in price which it had caused. In former debates he had heard the fact denied; but he did not think that, on the present occasion, any gentleman had denied that great fluctuations had been caused by the working of the present system. It was no answer to say, that in other parts of the world the fluctuations had been greater. Looking to the great commercial trade which this country carried on with every quarter of the globe, he had no hesitation in saying that, under a sound system of Corn-laws in this country, would be found, he would not say the lowest prices, but certainly the steadiest prices. That was an advantage which this country could not afford to throw away, any more than she could the other advantages which Providence had bestowed upon it. The right hon. Baronet opposite had quoted the price of rye in Prussia as a proof that in other countries the food of the people was subjected to greater, or at all events to as great fluctuations as it was in this country. He wondered that it had not occurred to the right hon. Baronet that those fluctuations in the price of rye in Prussia had been caused by the operation of the Corn-law in this country. The food of the people of Prussia consisted principally of rye, but it also consisted in wheat; and was it not obvious, that the moment this country began drawing her supply of wheat from Prussia, a great rise in the price of it would take place. The consequence was, that wheat became scarce, and the people were compelled to resort to rye, which of course also rose in price. The argument, therefore, of the right hon. Baronet on this point was very feeble. The right hon. Baronet also said, that he felt confident that the alteration which he proposed to make in the scale, would prevent the great fluctuations that had hitherto taken place; because, said he, the more gradual scale applied to barley, beans, and oats had produced less fluctuation in the price of those articles than the present scale had done in the price of wheat. He was surprised to hear the right hon. Baronet compare two things which did not admit of comparison. Wheat was the food of the people, and there was always a demand for it; but such was not the case with barley, beans, and oats. It was therefore impossible to compare them with wheat. He could not make out how the new scale proposed by the Government, could in any way materially remove or mitigate those evils which sad experience proved to attach to the present system. The right hon. Baronet laid great stress on the falling off in the American market; and he said, that the reason for his proposing an alteration in the Corn-laws was, that the field to which this country could go for a supply of food might not be limited. But did the right hon. Baronet really believe, that his scheme would enable this country to deal with America for wheat any more than the present scale did? It was an utter delusion to suppose that it would. His noble Friend, the Member for Liverpool, shook his head, and appeared to hold a different opinion. He was surprised to perceive his noble Friend offer such a contradiction, for he held in his hand a document of far more value than any thing he could say on this part of the subject. It was a petition presented by the noble Lord, the Member for Liverpool, from a body of merchants engaged in the American trade, and the House, he thought, would agree with him as to the value of the testimony of these Gentlemen. The petitioners stated, that the trade in flour and wheat with the United States laboured under great disadvantages in consequence of the working of the sliding-scale, and that they were in this respect only nominally on the same footing as the most favoured nations. The petitioners went on to say, that a moderate fixed duty would materially benefit the trade between the two countries. They alluded to the extension of the exports of the domestic manufactures of the United States, which had greatly increased within the last few years, and this they attributed to the restrictive policy that now existed. They stated, that the whole question of the tariff would soon be discussed by Congress, and they expressed a fear that unless this country relaxed in the present system, retaliatory measures would be adopted. These were the sentiments of a great body of gentlemen in Liverpool engaged in the American trade, and highly as he valued the opinion of the noble Lord, he confessed that on a question of this kind he was inclined to defer to the opinion of the petitioners. The right hon. Gentleman, the Vice-President of the Board of Trade, had made use of an argument which, he confessed, he had heard with great surprise—he meant his allusion to the state of our commerce with Russia, and to the threat of Russia to establish a new tariff more hostile to British manufactures than that which now existed. The right hon. Gentleman had used this as an argument in favour of a sliding scale, but he should have come to a very different conclusion; he should say, that if it were true, and he believed it to be true—that if Russia, mainly owing to our own restrictive policy, was about to issue retaliatory measures against us, that this was a strong reason to induce this country to take care before they adopted a system of Corn-laws, the effect of which would be to limit the Corn-trade with those countries. He said, that they ought to take great heed before doing this, for their care should be to adopt some system which should include in a corn trade every quarter of the world. The sure way of being independent of any particular country for a supply of wheat was to have commercial intercourse with all. That was their only security. If it be true what had been stated by the Vice-President of the Board of Trade, that hereafter they must expect their trade with the Baltic to suffer a diminution—if this be true, could they do anything more pernicious than to legislate on the principle of a sliding scale, unfavourable to a trade with those parts, and especially unfavourable to more distant countries, such as the United States of America? These considerations, and others which had been advanced from that side of the House, had convinced him that any Corn-law founded on the principle of a sliding-scale would be ruinous to the commercial interests of the country. It seemed a strange thing that one law should be thought applicable to all other commodities, and another law to corn alone. Those who advocated the sliding-scale inverted the ordinary principles of taxation, and it rested with them to prove to the House and to the country the advantages of such a system. The common principle was to proportion the duty to the value of the commodity, but by the sliding scale there was a high duty on wheat when the article itself was low, and a low duty when the article was high. The result of this was, of course, to make the trade a dangerous and a speculative one to those who embarked in it. Allusion had been made to certain parties who approved of the present state of things. No doubt, they would always find merchants of a very speculative turn. No doubt, many of these ingenious and active men had made large sums under the old law, and no doubt they expected to make large sums under the new law also. He believed, that the plan proposed would offer as wide a field for speculation as the scheme for which it was intended as a substitute, but he did not believe that prudent men would embark more under the new, than they had done under the old scheme. The effect of the law in this particular had been so clearly stated by Mr. Hubbard, that he would read to the House an extract from that gentleman's pamphlet. It was as follows:—

> "Within my own knowledge, an individual upon some importations of wheat realized a profit of 100 per cent (the slide had reached its lowest point, just as the wheat arrived); at another period, wheat which he had ordered in time of scarcity arrived only when the slide had risen to a prohibitory duty; it remained many years in granary, and he lost 50 per cent. He gave up the trade, for he was one of those old fashioned merchants who prefer safety and moderate profits, to the enormous gains, or ruinous losses, of a speculative trade. Were there no other objection to the sliding scale this ought to suffice, that it forces those engaged in the corn-trade to encounter risks equal to those of gambling; and the agriculturist cannot justly ask to be protected by means which operate so injuriously upon another class of his countrymen."

It would appear that Mr. Hubbard differed from the right hon. Baronet, the Member for Kent, as to the object of the Corn-law. There was another point to which he would briefly refer—he meant the effect it had on the shipping interest of the country. The importance of this interest was admitted by all, and he begged to call their attention to the effect which the Corn-law or any similar law had on the shipping interest. The effect of it was to throw the carrying trade with corn into the hands of foreigners. At this moment the trade in corn between this country and Prussia, the most important of all corn trades, was carried on three-fourths in Prussian vessels, and one-fourth in English. In consequence of the gambling nature of the trade, and the hurried way in which the demand was occasioned, it was found impossible to have recourse to British ships for carrying it on. On this part of the subject he found most valuable testimony in the papers which Government had lately laid on the Table of the House. He held in his hand the communication made by a most competent witness, Mr. Macgregor, the consular agent at Elsinore. To that gentleman this country was deeply indebted for the manner in which he had conducted his regard to the Sound dues, and which he had, by his intelligence and ability, brought to a satisfactory result. This is what that gentleman, in answer to Mr. Meek, says is the effect of the sliding scale on the shipping interest:—

> "If the trade in corn was made constantly open in England, the natural consequences would be, that the British merchant would again become the principal agent for the regular supply of his own country with corn directly from the place of growth, and British shipping would be employed to a much greater extent in the carriage of grain than it is at present. The English Corn-laws have a general tendency to disturb the ordinary course of trade, and, as regards this country (Denmark), in particular, they have had the effect, first, to make this Government persevere in its system of high duties upon British manufactures, and secondly, to throw the trade of Denmark into the hands of the Hanse Towns, which now almost exclusively supply her with colonial produce and manufactures, and receive the surplus of her corn in return, to meet foreign orders in their own market. Hamburgh, in particular, thus becomes more and more the centre of trade between the states of the German Custom-house union and the northern countries, and it is a positive fact, that the Danish corn market is no longer at Copenhagen, but at Hamburgh."

Among the many other advantages which would result to this country from a corn trade established on sound principles, he believed that London would be greatly benefited thereby, inasmuch as it would become a great dépôt for the supply of corn to all other parts of the kingdom; and he need not say how much employment this would give to the various branches of trade. It was not true, as had been said, that the question to be decided was, whether a sliding scale or a fixed duty should be adopted. The question which they were called on to decide was, whether they would adopt a principle which experience had proved to be unsound and faulty, or one which would not be liable to the evils flowing from the present system. He did not say this for the purpose of concealing his own opinion, for when he had the honour to serve the Crown he heartily joined in the proposal calculated to advance the interests of the nation, and which he believed was founded on a principle not inconsistent with the commercial prosperity of the country. He did not seek to conceal from the House, that in giving his vote against the motion of the right hon. Baronet opposite, he did not do so with any intention of throwing the trade in corn entirely open. It had been said that the arguments used against a sliding scale told equally against a fixed duty, but he begged the House to recollect that they had tried the one, and they had seen how it had worked; it had been abandoned even by those who were once its most strenuous supporters. Before he came to deal with the objections that had been urged against a fixed duty, he wished to say a few words in reference to the authorities quoted during the debate on this question. M'Culloch and Ricardo had been quoted as advocates of a fixed duty, while, on the other hand, they had been told that Mr. Huskisson was a decided opponent of a fixed duty, and various passages had been adduced from his speeches to this effect. He had watched the conduct of that eminent man, he knew the progressive character of his mind, and he felt how much more valuable were the opinions of his latter than those of his earlier years. That statesman had been quoted as an advocate for the present system of Corn-law or for something like it; but on the last occasion on which Mr. Huskisson addressed the House on the subject, he spoke in the following terms:—

> "It was his unalterable conviction that we could not uphold the Corn-laws now in existence, together with the taxation, and increase the national prosperity or preserve public contentment."

He might be told that though this might be an emphatic condemnation of the present Corn-law, it did not follow that Mr. Huskisson would not have supported the plan proposed by the present Government; but, he asked, could any man who had heard the sentiments of Mr. Huskisson believe that that statesman, after condemning the present law, would have been prepared to support one containing such slight modifications as that proposed by government? He did not pretend to say, that he claimed Mr. Huskisson as an advocate of an absolute fixed duty. He did not wish to press the argument further than it would fairly go. But Mr. Huskisson totally condemned the principle of the Corn-law now in being, and was certainly an advocate for a very great alteration of the present system; and if he were not an advocate of, he very closely approximated in opinion to the principle of a fixed duty. But having quoted the authority of a great statesman whom they had no longer amongst them, he would now quote the opinion of one who fortunately was still able to assist in and adorn their deliberations. He (Mr. Labouchere) was not generally fond of bandying personal attacks across the Table, but there were some occasions on which it was difficult for flesh and blood to withstand it. The noble Lord the Secretary for the Colonies, in the course of last year made a memorable speech to his constituents at Lancaster. He, on reading the report of that speech, could not help asking himself whether it was the same Mr. Stanley whom he recollected in earlier days, by whose side he had the honour of sitting in the year 1828, and to the expression of whose opinions he had listened when the Corn-laws were the subject of discussion at that period? Although he was prompted to ask the question, he was afraid there was no doubt of the identity. In 1828, when the present Corn-law was passed Mr. Stanley took part in the debate, and said, he had yet to learn the reasons which induced—[Lord *Stanley* made an observation which induced Mr. Labouchere to say, "Shall I read the whole?"]—Mr. Stanley, then, on that occasion, said that

> "He was certainly inclined to the opinion of those who abstractedly supported a fixed permanent duty, but feeling that it was impracticable to carry such a measure, he felt that the next best plan would be, to adopt such a scale of duties as would keep the price of corn as low as possible, at the same time giving to the agriculturists a fair profit."

[*Cheers from the Ministers.*] He was at a loss what those cheers could imply.

What the noble Lord on that occasion, in effect, said was this; that he preferred a fixed duty to a sliding scale, and that the only reason he did not then support a fixed duty was, that he was afraid there did not exist the means of carrying his opinion into effect. But, now, circumstances had altered.

> Turne, quod optanti divûm promittere nemo
> Auderet, volvenda dies en attulit ultro!

He really should not despair, if the noble Lord would join his efforts to theirs in defeating the measure of the right hon. Baronet who now sat near the noble Lord, and if the House were to come to a conclusion not to give protection to agriculture in the shape of a sliding scale, he would not despair—aided by the noble Lord and those whom he could influence—of carrying the proposition for a fixed duty, or, if considered better, a proposition for no protection at all. Would the noble Lord, joined by those very numerous troops whom he could bring over with him, side with them, he would be enabled to carry that principle which, in 1828, he was only decided against because he had not the means of practically carrying it out. But they were told that, however fair the proposition of a fixed duty might appear to be in theory, and that however strong might be the objections that might be urged against a sliding scale—however much a fixed duty might be in consonance with the ordinary principles that were applicable to commerce—yet there were grave objections of a peculiar kind which counterbalanced all that might be said in favour of it. He would very shortly allude to those objections. He believed that they might be resolved into two main propositions. The first was, that in a time of plenty, a fixed duty would be ruinous to the agriculturist. He believed the answer to this objection was, that in a season of plenty, the agriculturist would find a compensation in the quantity of his produce for the diminished price of that produce. That, he believed, would be the natural compensation under those circumstances. But the other objection was one upon which much greater stress was laid. It was asserted, that in a time of scarcity, it would be grievous to the consumer, and that it would not be possible to maintain the duty at all. He believed, that this objection was equally unfounded. He did not think, except in circumstances of the very rarest occurrence, that there would be any difficulty in maintaining a fixed duty, nor did he believe such a duty would operate grievously or injuriously. It appeared to him as clear—clear as any demonstration could make it—that if under all common circumstances, they had a fixed duty, and they were called upon to abandon that duty, in consequence of high prices, the only effect of the abandonment of it would be to make a present of the duty, either wholly, or almost wholly, to the corn-holders and speculators, without the consumers deriving the smallest benefit. He had that confidence in the good sense of the commercial intellect of this country, that when this came to be understood, there would not be that clamour for the abandonment of a fixed duty, which many appeared to apprehend. His noble Friend near him (Lord John Russell) alluded to this part of the question in his speech, and hon. Gentlemen opposite seemed to think, that they had a very great triumph in consequence of what fell from his noble Friend on that subject; but he (Mr. Labouchere) was perfectly prepared to take the same view of the question, as his noble Friend had done. He quite agreed with his noble Friend, as a matter of compromise, if it was found, that those fears really were the only reasons which prevented a majority of that House from adopting a fixed duty, and if some means could be devised by which that duty might in seasons of extreme high prices, be made to vanish, that it would be worth while to purchase so important an improvement in the law by making that compromise. But he had no hesitation in saying, that if such a concession were not made for obtaining a great good, it would, in every other sense, be not a good, but almost an unqualified evil. Hon. Gentlemen might say, that if it were allowed, it was possible, that circumstances might occur, in which it might be necessary to relax a fixed duty in cases of high prices, then they ought to make some provision for that case. It was quite possible, that circumstances might occur, when it would be desirable to discourage the importation of foreign grain into this country; but his opinion was, that this power of relaxation of the law might be fairly left to the discretion of the executive Government, acting upon its own responsibility under a state of things which was so unlikely to occur. He was not advancing any new or unconstitutional doctrine in saying this. The executive of this country had frequently, in various periods of its history, been empowered to make special provisions under special circumstances. It had been done recently in two cases, with regard to the article of sugar. Upon all questions of trade, when a duty operated prejudicially to the public weal, the maxim "*Salus populi suprema lex*," must prevail. The executive must set aside the law, and trust to Parliament for their justification. The more he considered the subject, the more confirmed he was in the conviction, that the Legislature might, with perfect safety, adopt a fixed duty, and that if the executive discharged its obligations as it ought, to do, namely, not insist upon exacting that duty when prices were high, it might, under such circumstances of rare and occasional occurrence as could alone arise, be left to the executive to relax the law without any special provision. He did not wish to detain the House at any greater length. He would say, that however important he might consider the question of the Corn-laws to be at any time, there was one circumstance which made the consideration of those laws peculiarly important on the present occasion. The right hon. Baronet had announced to the House and the country—agreeing in that respect with the late Government—that he was not bringing the question of the Corn-laws forward as an isolated measure, but that he was prepared to follow it up with a general revision of the tariff, with a view to see whether the protection hitherto given to certain branches of trade ought not to be relaxed with due regard to the general prosperity and welfare of the country. He always felt that the adjustment of the Corn-laws, if not a preliminary measure, was an absolute concomitant of any measure of revision of the British tariff. He always felt that no revision could be made that should affect the great colonial interests, and the home interests—the mining interests, for instance, with any justice—he had almost said with any decency—unless they at the same time applied a similar principle of revision to the greater landed interests. He confessed that the measure of the right hon. Baronet excited in his mind this fear—either that the other measures which he proposed to bring forward in connection with it would be of the same unsatisfactory nature as that which was now lying on the Table, or that, having dealt timidly with the great question of the Corn-laws, he would go so fully into the reform of the other portions of our commercial system which he proposed to revise, that it would be thought that his different conduct in those cases was mainly attributable to the superior power of other considerations, rather than to the desire of doing justice to all. He certainly did not mean to add—if anything that fell from so humble a source could add—to the irritation which prevailed throughout the country in reference to this subject. He saw now in progress that which he had always considered to be most dangerous to this country—he meant Englishmen arrayed against each other, not on the old grounds of party attachments, which, when kept within due bounds, he regarded as perfectly consistent with a healthy and satisfactory state of the country, but arrayed, he really believed, in a contest of classes. There was nothing he so much deprecated as such a result. He could say, as a Member of the late Government, that there was nothing that they had so much at heart as by a fair and reasonable compromise to stay the progress of these feelings; and he would say now, that if the right hon. Baronet, coming forward there as the first Minister of the Crown, had proposed a series of measures which he had thought were calculated to effect that great object, no trifling differences of opinions, still more no mean or party objects, should have prevented him from giving his perfect support to those measures. To give such support under such circumstances he held to be one of the greatest, one of the most patriotic duties of a statesman. As for the plan itself, he had little doubt that it would become the law of the land, and he heartily hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would be justified in the result, and that his proposition would work well for the protection of the agricultural, the commercial, and the manufacturing interests of the country; but he must say, that with the experience of the past, he could not fairly expect it. He felt that he had already trespassed too much on the indulgence of the House, and he sincerely thanked them for the attention with which they had listened to him. He should give his sincere support to the proposition of the noble lord.

Sir *E. Knatchbull* wished to say one word in explanation, which was rendered necessary by a remark that had fallen from the right hon. Gentleman. He had said not one single word as to the object of the measure of the Government being the raising of rents or the maintaining of the value of land. No such words had ever fallen from his lips.

Sir *J. Graham* said, that the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, always spoke in such a manner, that in proportion as it was agreeable to listen to him so it was disadvantageous to follow him; and he certainly should not have followed him if it had not been for some expressions which he let fall, and which were of such a kind, that to use the right hon. Gentleman's own expression, flesh and blood could not resist the temptation of following and replying to them. He must first, however, observe, that though his respect was profound for the rules of the House, and for the clearness and equity with which those rules were expounded by the right hon. Gentleman in the Chair, yet the exceedingly strict adherence to forms did sometimes occasion serious deviations from the rules of common sense. The course they were then following well illustrated this. A great number of hon. Members on the opposite side of the House were decidedly of opinion that no protection to agriculture ought to be permitted; that the trade in corn ought to be wholly free, and, in fact, that any protection was unreasonable, and ought to be withdrawn. But what was the House then discussing? On the proposition of the noble Lord, the question was not whether there should be any protection; that was assumed and conceded by the noble Lord; and what was to be the kind of protection that they were to grant was the real question they were then discussing. Such was the effect of too strict an adherence to these forms. He should proceed to address himself, in the first place, to one of the closing topics of the right hon. Gentleman's speech. The right hon. Gentleman had stated, that there was something threatening in the present aspect of affairs, and that discussions had been opened throughout the country which he thought had something dangerous in them. But would the right hon. Gentleman allow him to ask who was responsible for opening these discussions, causing this threatening aspect of affairs? When the Government, of which the right hon. Gentleman was a Member, had, in June last, come down to the House and announced to the people of this country that the time had arrived when the existing Corn-laws ought to be revised, and when, having failed within the walls of Parliament, they made their appeal to the people by a dissolution, he asked was it possible that this question should not be agitated from one end of the country to the other—was it possible, that to use the words of the noble Lord, the very foundations of society should not be shaken by the agitation thus produced? And though the right hon. Gentleman had said that the late Government were ready and desirous to stay the progress of this array of class against class by means of a fair and reasonable compromise, that he absolutely denied could be predicated of the proposition of the late Government, while it was the precise definition of that which had been tendered by his right hon. Friend near him. The right hon. Gentleman had asked what was the real nature of the proposition of her Majesty's Government, and he had inferred from something that had fallen from the right hon. Paymaster of the Forces, that the proposition was a partial one, and that it was intended to operate in favour of some particular class. Now the fact was, that his right hon. Friend, in bringing forward the proposition, had distinctly announced that he and his Colleagues would not have been parties to the plan, had they not been distinctly of opinion that it would be a benefit to all. So the matter stood on the statement of his right hon. Friend, and so it stood on the disclaimer and explanation of the right hon. Paymaster of the Forces. With respect to the remarks that had been made by the right hon. Gentleman on a passage in a speech of his noble Friend, the Secretary for the Colonies, delivered in 1828, he would adopt then the view which his noble Friend took in 1828, and he would reproduce the present measure of the Government, as giving the lowest amount of duty which her Majesty's Ministers considered to be consistent with an adequate protection to the native industry of this country. The noble Lord who had proposed the resolution on the Table asserting the propriety of adopting a fixed duty, and who always was fond of using an antithesis—and no one used an antithesis more neatly—had said of the proposition of his right hon. Friend, that it conceded, but did not conciliate; that it disturbed, but did not settle. Now, he asked, could he more adequately describe the fixed duty which the noble Lord proposed? He saw the hon. Member for Sheffield opposite. He knew not whether the hon. Member had been present at a meeting at Leeds, on the subject of the Corn-laws, which was held about a year ago, but he believed that on one of the banners displayed at that meeting there was an inscription that a fixed duty was a fixed injustice to the people. So much for "conceding without conciliating." Now, with regard to "disturbing, but failing to settle," how far would the fixed duty of the noble Lord bear that test? He did not know whether the right hon. Gentleman, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, was present in his place, but if he was not, he was quite sure that he should accurately quote an expression which that right hon. Gentleman used lately as applied to an 8*s.* fixed duty. The right hon. Gentleman thought the 8*s.* fixed duty was desirable on the principle of instalment. He said, "Give us the 8*s.* duty to begin with, and I tell you that six months after its enactment we shall get rid of it altogether." So much for disturbing, but failing to settle. But with the experience which he had had during recent years, he really must say that he was decidedly of opinion, that in the times in which they lived, "finality," as it was termed, as a principle to be applied to legislation for the people of this country, was a phantom. He had himself been a fellow-student in the finality school together with the noble Lord opposite. That noble Lord and he, had had, he thought, some experience with reference to bringing forward large measures, larger, perhaps, somewhat, than strict right might, in the opinion of those affected by them, have rendered either prudent or necessary; and yet these measures had been made large, in the hope that their finality would be established, and that the concession thus made would stay further demands. But he profiting by his experience, had endeavoured faithfully to fulfil the purpose for which those measures had been brought forward. Having declared for their finality, he had endeavoured to give effect to them. He had not been one of those who, having declared for the finality of those measures, had been the first to promote further progress—that course he had firmly and constantly resisted; but having taken that course, and having, as he had said, profited by his experience, he for one would never again be a party to recommending for the adoption of the Legislature any measure in the nature of a concession larger than he should think either prudent or just, in the vain expectation that by going beyond those bounds of prudence and justice, he should succeed in establishing such a measure as a piece of final legislation. Now, therefore, in looking at this question he should not support any proposition for the adjustment of the Corn-laws with any view to what is called a final settlement of them; he certainly should not do so as willing to disturb, in the hope possibly of being able to settle—he would not concede, in the hope to be able to conciliate; but, looking at the great interests of this country that were involved in the question now under discussion, throwing all consideration of finality aside, and all idea of possible conciliation, and indeed every other minor consideration, he would be disposed to tender this settlement on the present occasion as that which he considered due to the consumer on the one hand, and as what he believed necessary to the maintenance of the real interests and safety of the producer on the other. The noble Lord had enunciated with great perspicuity some first principles as to trade in general. The noble Lord, in the first instance, laid it down as a general principle that trade ought to be perfectly free, and that protection was the exception, and not the rule. The noble Lord had made that enunciation of principles with his usual ability; but he had on record, on part of the noble Lord, a doctrine laid down with decidedly greater precision than any speech in that House would allow. He found in a work of the noble Lord, published many years ago, that doctrine laid down with great consistency and accuracy, and he must say that, as it was given there, it appeared to him to be the right doctrine. He alluded to the noble Lord's work, *Memoirs of the Affairs of Europe since the peace of Utrecht.* In that work the noble Lord laid it down thus:—

> "The first rule on the subject of trade is to allow a general freedom of commerce, but to this rule there must be an exception made."

(Here it was clear what the noble Lord had in view.)

> "When the protection of the manufacture of a particular article is necessary to the strength and greatness of the country, economical reasons must then give way to political, and some wealth must be sacrificed to security

and independence. Or where a particular branch has been very much favoured by law, and a protection has been given, then it must be taken away very gradually." ("*Hear*.")

What! a cheer from the hon. Member for Sheffield, and from the hon. Member for Kendal! He had thought those Gentlemen, though they agreed with the noble Lord to-night on his fixed duty, were free traders—he thought those hon. Members were for a total repeal of the Corn-laws. How were those cheers which he had just heard consistent with those views. But to conclude the quotation from the noble Lord:—

"That protection must be taken away very gradually, lest the people should suddenly be reduced to famine and starvation."

But the noble Lord had not been satisfied with laying down the principle to which he (Sir J. Graham) had referred. He had thought it not beneath him to indulge in somewhat of a sneer at what he called, "that inimitable invention," the sliding scale, and yet the noble Lord had himself paid a just tribute to that "great invention." Had not the noble Lord himself also paid some tributes to the principle of the sliding scale? He had had the honour of serving with the noble Lord in the Cabinet of Earl Grey; and, if he was not mistaken, he had had the advantage of voting with the noble Lord in 1833 and 1834, when that inimitable invention the sliding scale was supported by the government of Earl Grey. But now the noble Lord, sitting near the noble Lord the Member for London, told them that there was something slippery in the character of the sliding scale. Now, had not the fixed duty of the noble Lord something of the principle of lubricity about it? Had not it, also, something of the character of slipperiness about it? In the month of June last Her Majesty's then Government had been as distinctly pledged as any Government could be by their statement in Parliament, that an 8*s*. duty was brought forward with a view not of disturbing but of settling. In that month, therefore, the measure was considered by the noble Lord and his colleagues as one that would take its stand and have a permanent operation. But both the noble Lord and those who acted with him had, in the course of the discussion during these two evenings, endeavoured to glide away from the 8*s*. duty. They were, no longer, it appeared, for a duty of 8*s*. The duty was now to be made dependent upon the amount of separate charge upon the land which the landed interest might be able to prove was borne by the land more than by other interests. The hon. Baronet, the Member for the Tower Hamlets—and yet he supposed he (Sir J. Graham) must be mistaken, for he thought he heard the noble Lord distinctly mention 8*s*. as the amount of duty, but the hon. Baronet disclaimed altogether stopping there; he seemed to think the noble Lord had almost been guilty of an indiscretion in (as he thought) naming the 8*s*. as the amount of fixed duty—the hon. Baronet thought the noble Lord's colleagues were by no means bound to the 8*s*. duty—that they had, in fact, slipped away from that proposition of the 8*s*. duty, and substituted for it such an amount of duty as he, on hearing the proof which the landed interest might be able to give of the burdens pressing upon them, might think an equitable one. So much for the stability of the fixed duty. But, then, as to the duration of it. He had understood on a former occasion that the system of averages was to be preserved, in order that there might be a remission of the duty when the price rose above a certain amount. When the noble Lord first announced his adoption of the theory of a fixed duty, he at the same time also declared that he was in favour of the maintenance of the system of averages, for the purpose of remitting the duty when prices rose to a certain amount. But last night the noble Lord, though he was not quite distinct as to the point on which the duty would be altered, yet could not be mistaken as having declared that up to 73*s*. or 74*s*. he would maintain the fixed, never mitigated, unvaried, fixed duty. After that the duty was to fall to 1*s*. Whatever could be said with regard to the disadvantage of the graduated scale, with a sudden fall in duty, coincident with a sudden rise in price, all those arguments applied *à fortiori* to the proposition last night made by the noble Lord; and upon this point he had been very much struck by the view taken by Mr. Hubbard. He had read that gentleman's pamphlet with great attention, and to a certain extent it had carried conviction to his judgment. He had discussed this question with his right hon Friend near him, and the remark he had made was, that the fixed duty might be satisfactory until the price of corn came up to a certain price; and that then any alteration of the duty would be fatal to the success of the scheme, because it was clear that the supply of corn being defective in this country, foreign corn must be introduced, and it was clear that no foreign corn would be brought into the home market until the given point when the 8*s.* duty was to cease had been attained. The argument was so neatly put by Mr. Hubbard, that with the permission of the House he would quote it. He said:

> "To establish a fixed duty, with its reduction made contingent upon the averages reaching a certain price, or even to allow the expectation of such a reduction as an act of the ministry, would be to foster the grasping spirit which would then hold out for that price, as surely as it has hitherto held for the crowning price of 73*s.* In the present year, even Sir Robert Peel's hypothesis might have been realized; and had an 8*s.* duty been decreed in May last, the price might have risen to 90*s.* in September or October. But why would it have risen? Not because in July and August there was not an abundance of foreign corn in our warehouses; not because it could not be profitably sold at the prices then existing; but because, relying on the opinion which Sir Robert Peel has again and again expressed, 'That when prices rose, a fixed duty could not be maintained,' the holders would have driven up the price by keeping back their corn (they would have created the scarcity by which they were to profit), and when an 'Order in Council' had kindly remitted them the duty, they would have exacted the utmost which the people would give rather than starve. It would require no combination to effect this, the certain benefit of the result would induce unanimity, nor could those interested be blamed for their accordant action: the blame would attach to the system which invited and rewarded it."

That was a conclusive argument against either of the plans proposed. The right hon. Gentleman, who had just sat down had said, *salus populi suprema lex;* but a dispensive power should be exercised over the law itself in dealing with this question on their own responsibility. He was satisfied that whoever would look to the past debates on the subject of the Corn-laws would find, however great might have been the difference of opinion on other subjects, that on that of the Corn-laws the uniform opinion was, that the executive Government ought not to be armed with such a power; that it would be dangerous in the extreme, and leave them open to the suspicion on the one hand of having too long delayed the exercise of it, and on the other of having exercised it too soon. The right hon. Gentleman who spoke last, referred with considerable boldness to the disputed authority of Mr. Huskisson on this subject, and quoted a passage in one of his speeches which touched on the subject, and which, as far as it went, certainly threw some doubt over the principle of protection itself—of any protection being afforded to the growth of home-grown corn. But he would call the attention of the House to what he conceived must be taken in connexion with a circumstance of that kind—namely, that Mr. Huskisson referred to the preference he was disposed to give to the original proposal of Mr. Canning in 1827, as contradistinguished from his proposal of 1828. He would read to the House the opinion expressed by Mr. Huskisson when this question came directly under discussion for the last time, and when Mr. Huskisson was a responsible Minister of the Crown. On the 22d of April, 1828, Mr. Huskisson, not indirectly, but directly, dealt with this question of a fixed duty in these words:

> "An hon. Gentleman opposite had spoken in favour of a fixed duty. Abstractedly that might look well enough; but, when they regarded the circumstances of the country and the wants of the people, they would see the impossibility of adopting such a principle. If a high permanent duty were imposed, then, in periods of scarcity, the poor would be exposed to sufferings and miseries, the infliction of which no claims for protection on the part of the home corn-grower could ever justify. For the advantages, then, which the grower foregoes when corn is high, by the admission of foreign grain, he receives compensation by the imposition of a high rate of duties when corn is at a low price. He receives, in fact, only that remuneration to which he is justly entitled. When legislating upon this subject, they were bound to look to the different and varying circumstances of the country, and to the wants and necessities of its inhabitants. A permanent fixed duty was, therefore out of the question."

Now, could any Gentleman say after that, that a doubt ought to exist as to the opinion of Mr. Huskisson upon the principle of a fixed duty, as distinguished from that of the sliding scale? A fixed duty was here absolutely pronounced by him to be impossible. The hon. Member for Sheffield had asked what would be the effect of the measure proposed by her

Majesty's Government on the price of wheat? To answer that question, he thought it necessary, in the first instance, to come to an understanding as to what in common years might be the price at which foreign wheat could be landed in bond, and all charges paid in the British market. If that point were settled, or put upon anything like a fixed foundation, the explanation of the precise working of the proposed scale would not be very difficult. He would not rely on this occasion exclusively upon the information supplied by Mr. Meek, but would take the evidence of the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton. Striking out from his column of prices of the article of wheat in foreign markets two of the items—namely, the prices at Rotterdam and Antwerp, which were almost nominal prices, which were higher than those of any other ports of Europe, and which could not fairly be included, as England was not supplied from those places; if any hon. Gentleman would strike out those two prices, both of which were 55*s.*, he would find that the average price of wheat on board was somewhere about 36*s.* He (Sir J. Graham) would assume, *communibus annis*, that the price on board was 40*s.* On account of the trade in ports at great distances being but slight, while the cost of conveyance was great, if, as he proposed, they struck out Palermo and Odessa, they would find, that instead of the average cost of conveyance being 4*s.* 6*d.*, it would be reduced to between 3*s.* 6*d.* and 4*s.* He assumed, therefore, that the cost of transportation, *communibus annis*, was 4*s.* That added to the average price of corn on board brought it into bond in the English market at 40*s.*, and if the price at home was 58*s.* a quarter, the duty under the proposed plan would be but 14*s.*, thus showing that foreign wheat could come fully into competition with home produce as soon as its price rises to 56*s.* It appeared from Mr. Layton Cooke's pamphlet that the present scale, whatever might be the intention of the legislature, protected the English farmer up to 56*s.* per quarter. If they reduced the prohibitory point of the present law from 65*s.* to 56*s.* when foreign wheat would compete with the home grower, this was, as he conceived, a great reduction made to the consumer, but one to which he believed the consumer was fairly entitled. For, notwithstanding all that had been said against the existing Corn-law, he did contend that, under the shelter and protection of that law, the grower of home corn had, by the expenditure of capital, and by the use of artificial manure and various other appliances, so improved the productive power that a considerably lower price than when the late Corn-law was framed was now a remunerating price. He had shown that the point where protection began was considerably lower under the proposed law; this was in favour of the consumer, but he thought it was a reduction which could be made without the slightest danger to the home grower. Now, the hon. Gentleman himself who had just sat down had made a most important admission, clearly showing that this would be the case. He said "there were some advantages in this scale, and among others it would yield a larger revenue to the state." If it yielded a larger revenue to the State it necessarily must bring a larger amount of foreign corn into the market, and at a time when it was most wanted. The natural effect also of the present law was to hold out expectations to the holders of corn, that by continuing to hold it they would get it admitted at a low duty. By the new scale there would be a larger introduction of foreign corn, but it would be introduced gradually at the varying scale of duties, and not as at present at the lowest duty. But this very system, which had been so much condemned, had been very severely tried in the last three or four years. We had had three or four consecutively defective harvests. In the three or four antecedent years, so far from being dependent on other countries for our supply of corn, from 1832 to 1837 this country had produced as much corn as the inhabitants consumed. The evidence of the last four years showed considerable deficiency in the harvests, and much corn had been required, and notwithstanding all the advantages of the 1*s.* duty for the admission of foreign corn, the high prices which led to the 1*s.* duty had been of short duration. The public had had the advantage of the admission of large quantities of corn at a nominal duty, and during the last three years the quantity introduced had averaged about 2,250,000 quarters annually, the price of which in bond had averaged 43*s.* In the report made by Mr. Huskisson on this subject, he had spoken highly of the bonding system. He (Sir J. Graham) could conceive no greater advantage than that of having great quantities of foreign corn waiting the necessities of this country. Mr. Huskisson had anticipated that advantage, and said that

> "Having warehouses filled with foreign corn in this country has this great advantage—it places the supply of our wants out of the reach of foreign states, putting it out of their power, in seasons of scarcity, to aggravate those wants by prohibiting the exportation of corn."

That which Mr. Huskisson clearly descried the present system of the Corn-laws practically effected; and he (Sir J. Graham) did contend that the warehouses of foreign corn in bond, ready to be brought into the market for home consumption (whatever might be the loss to individuals), had all the advantage of public granaries to this country at the cost of individuals. But a great deal was said about the gambling nature of the corn trade. He had yet to learn why if a speculation were unfortunate, it was to be termed a gambling transaction, but if fortunate, was to be said to be a mark of great prudence and foresight; the speculation was the same in its nature, whether successful or unsuccessful. He did not perceive any unwillingness in the parties to engage in speculations on account of their gambling character. They had heard nothing of the dangerous character of the opium trade with China from hon. Gentlemen opposite, although he confessed that he entertained strong opinions on the subject; but when the subject was adverted to, allusions were made to the great profits attendant on the trade, and which also was attended with losses, and something more than losses; but still there were advocates for the trade, and very strong advocates of it, amongst Gentlemen opposite. He was satisfied that, under the proposed change of the Corn-laws, the country would obtain the largest possible supply of corn, at the most regular rates, and at the smallest loss to the consumer. The perpetual fear that existed under the graduated scale that foreign corn would be introduced, kept the grower of the home market in check, and compelled him to bring his supply to market before he incurred the risk of the continental corn coming in. On the other hand, there was the perpetual hope of introducing foreign corn at a profit which operates on the foreign corn factor, to induce him at all times to import corn largely, and wait the turn of the British market, and that led to all the advantages of granaries for the public. He would now glance at the evils of a fixed duty. In years of abundance it was asked what became of the good of their demand on the continent, and if they failed to exclude foreign corn, what became of their protection? This was in years of abundance; but let them try it in years of scarcity. If the Government levied the duty, what became of their cheap bread? If they failed to levy it, what became of their protection? In short, he should say, with a high duty it must be a prohibition, except in dear seasons, and then the steadiness of their trade was destroyed. Then, when the price was lowest, and the necessity of protection to the home grower was the greatest, their protection failed, the greatest injury was done to the British agriculturist, and from that the greatest confusion in their home markets followed. His right hon. Friend the Paymaster of the Forces had been somewhat taunted, as if he had drawn some distinction between the agricultural class and the rest of the community. He might ask, though not invidiously, whether the majority of the whole community was not directly interested in the culture of the soil. His belief was, that the great numerical majority of the population of the United Kingdom was directly or indirectly deeply interested in the cultivation of the land. But, even if it were not so, still he contended that no great infliction could take place affecting the prosperity of the landed interest in all its ramifications which should not be fatal to the home market of the manufacturers. When they had formerly discussed this question, they had always been used to have the test applied of the exports and trade of the country. Hon. Members who wished to show the bad effects of the Corn-laws, showed deficiency of exports. It was very difficult to argue this question. He (Sir J. Graham) had argued it in 1833, when prices were low. The hon. Gentleman had told them. "All your apprehensions with respect to a change in the Corn-laws are absurd; if you consent to a change, your present prices will be raised, and the general effect of free-trade in corn will be to raise prices." Now, it was their misfortune to argue this question when, from deficient harvests, prices were high, and they were told, that "if there were a revision of the Corn-laws, cheap bread would be the certain consequence." That was not the only inconsistency. The test used to be the falling off of the exports. Now, indeed, the value of the home market was discovered. It was not contended that the exports had fallen off, for the returns showed that they were increasing. The noble Lord had quoted Adam Smith as an authority in support of the views which he entertained with respect to the Corn-laws. Perhaps he might be permitted to call to the recollection of the noble Lord the testimony which his own authority, Adam Smith, bore to the value of the home market for the produce of manufactured articles, and how strongly that writer dwelt upon the importance of the trade which was carried on between town and country. When this was taken into consideration, it was of the greatest consequence that the House should use the utmost caution in taking any step which could affect so important a branch of the industry of the country. When there was a deficiency in the home market for the consumption of manufactures, care should be taken not to interfere with the resources of those who were described by Adam Smith as a country's best customers. He felt that he was called upon to apologize to the House for attempting at that hour to enter upon details, yet he felt it his duty to point out as briefly as he could some circumstances which the hon. Member for Knaresborough had been blamed for adverting to on the previous evening—he meant the effect which the extensive application of machinery had worked in superseding manual labour. He had in his hand a report with respect to this point which had only that day been laid upon the Table of the House, and the matters detailed in it were founded upon no questionable authority. It was the report of Mr. Horner, the inspector of the woollen, cotton, silk, and flax mills in the county of Lancaster, and the West Riding of Yorkshire; and there were certain facts contained in that report to which he wished particularly to call the attention of the House. In the first place, the report stated, that in the county of Lancaster, that there were 1,541 mills employed in those four branches of manufacture. The greater number of these worked eighty-seven per cent of work, seventy-two of the mills worked full time, sixteen worked various amounts of time, and of the whole number of the whole of the mills engaged in the four branches of trade, which he had specified, there were only thirteen not employed. Then, with respect to the quantity of work done by these mills, the report went on to show, that the increase in machinery had effected an enormous increase in the production. With respect to cotton, Mr. Horner stated, that the quantity of cotton worked up in this country, in 1837, was 36,000,000lb.; in 1838, 41,000,000lb.; in 1839, 38,000,000lb.; in 1840, 45,000,000lb.; in 1841, 43,000,000lb. The quantity of cotton consumed at the close of the war was less than the excess that had taken place in the consumption of 1841 over 1837. He repeated, that during the last four years, the increase had been greater in amount than the quantity of cotton before 1814. He did not mean to say, that the increase of the manufacturing produce and the distress which prevailed throughout the country, stood to each other in the relation of cause and effect, but he pointed out the fact that an enormous increase in the single article of cotton had taken place within the last four years under the operation of the existing Corn-laws, which were alleged to be so fatal to the industry of the country. It should be remembered, too, that these four years were years of severe trial, arising out of deficient harvests, which no foresight could guard against, and which no human power could avert. It might be said, that the manufacturers had not carried on their works at a profit, but this did not appear to him to be the case. The hon. Member for Leicester seemed to dissent, and appeared to hint that these were old mills; but it appeared that, since 1839, there had been an increase of ninety-one mills. These mills possessed machinery of 3,581 horse power, and gave employment to 16,050 persons. He understood, also, that the old mills were being worked; but he wished to have some explanation from the opposite side as to the decline of our trade within the last few years, when it appeared that since 1839, not less than ninety-one new mills had been erected, of 3,581 horse power. But was nothing to be said with respect to the increase of power in the old mills? He found it stated in this report of Mr. Horner, that inducements were held out to the proprietors of the old mills to adopt machinery of greater power. It was stated that in one mill the drawing frames had been improved to such an extent, that for every two drawing frames which occupied six persons each in 1839, a single drawing frame had been substituted which employed two persons to work it. It appeared, then, that in this one mill only, the power of machinery had been increased six-fold; the result, therefore, was, that for every six persons employed in it a few years ago only one was employed now. To what extent, then, has manual labour been superseded by machinery? The same authority dwells, in another part of his report, on the extent to which this has been carried. He states that in one mill at Manchester, a few years ago, there were eight mules, each having 328 spindles; but the length of the mules had since been doubled, each having 658 spindles, and by this change in the machinery one-half the labour formerly employed had been superseded. It was stated also, in a paper appended to this report, the amount to which wages had been reduced. This return was taken from the wages book of one of the largest mills at Manchester. The first return stated that on the 12th of January, 1837, the number of persons employed in the mill was 487, and the amount of wages they received in the course of the week was 350*l.*, and that they worked up 2,313lbs. of cotton; that in the week ending the 14th of January, 1841, the same mill, with the same proprietor, and under the same management, and carryiug on similar work, employed 354 persons, who received only 227*l.* wages; and that instead of working up 2,313lbs. of cotton, they used 2,759lbs. There was 103*l.* less per week paid for wages of workmen, whilst there was a slight increase in the quantity of the article produced. He was not one of those who contended that the ultimate effect of improvements in machinery was not conducive to the benefits of the working classes; but the first effect was to displace manual labour, and to substitute female and infantile for adult labour, and such displacements did at first inflict hardships upon the working classes. He would now support this measure, in the first place, because it abandoned a high scale of protection; in the next place, because he thought it would diminish greatly the frauds in the averages, by the only mode in which they could certainly be diminished, by diminishing the temptation; in the next place, because it would give a degree of certainty to the speculation in corn, by fixing a maximum duty, the absence of which was a great defect in the present scale; and because it would enable the holders of foreign corn to bring it to market before the shipping duty had reached its highest point. He thought that this was a great concession to the wants and the wishes of the parties who had most complained of the existing law, whilst it, at the same time, afforded such an adequate protection as would enable the home-grower to proceed in that course which he deemed most salutary and most conducive to the national wealth—to proceed step by step in the improvement of the land under cultivation, so that in any future time, notwithstanding the large increase of population, he might be enabled to offer an increased supply of home-grown corn without requiring an increased price. He thought that, in all these respects, it was infinitely preferable to a fixed duty, which, indeed, he held to be absolutely dangerous.

Debate adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, February 16, 1842.

MINUTES.] Bill 2°. Duchy of Cornwall.

Petitions presented. By Sir J. Easthope, from Loughborough and other places; by Mr. Yorke, from the City of York, and other places; by Dr. Bowring, from the Tower Hamlets, and other places; and by a considerable number of Members, from a great many Places, for a total repeal of the Corn-laws.—By Sir Edward Knatchbull, Mr. Byng, Col. Fox, and Sir Thomas Fremantle, from Residents in Holborn, Oxford Street, Bankside, and Battersea Fields, for Redemption of the Metropolitan Bridge Tolls.—By Sir Valentine Blake, from Galway; and by Col. Conolly, from places in Donegal, for Legalizing Marriages by Dissenters (Ireland).

LOCAL COURTS.] Mr. *W. Evans* wished to ask the right hon. Baronet whether it were intended, during the present Session, to bring in any bill for the establishment of local courts for the recovery of debts.

Sir *James Graham* was aware that great inconvenience had arisen last Session from persons out of doors not knowing what was the intention of the Government with respect to this subject. He could now state, that it was the intention of the Government to bring in a bill for the establishment of local courts. The bill would provide greater facilities than formerly, by local tribunals for the recovery of all debts below the amount of 15*l.*

Whether the bill would be introduced by himself in that House, or by his noble and learned Friend, the Lord Chancellor, in the other House, was not yet determined; but an early opportunity would be taken to introduce the measure. Under these circumstances, he trusted that it would not be necessary to make application to Parliament for the renewal of small debt acts, or for bills for the establishment of local tribunals for the recovery of small debts.

FLOGGING IN THE ARMY.] An hon. *Member* wished to ask the hon. and gallant Secretary to the Board of Ordnance, whether he intended, during the present Session, to bring forward his motion for the abolition of flogging in the army.

Captain *Boldero* stated, that for the last two or three Sessions he had not brought forward any motion on the subject. If the hon. Gentleman chose to make a motion on the subject, the hon. Member would find that his opinion remained unchanged; and he should vote as he had always hitherto voted.

BELFAST ELECTION—PRIVILEGE—PETITION BY A PEER.] The general committee of elections was sworn at the Table.

The Speaker read over the list of election petitions to be referred to this committee. On his coming to the Belfast petition,

Mr. *Thesiger* rose and said, that he wished to call the attention of the House to a subject, respecting which he had given notice, respecting the right of a Peer to interfere with the return of a Member to that House. He would first move that the petition be read. [Petition read accordingly.] He would next move that the sessional order relative to Peers not interfering with elections be read. [It was read accordingly.] The point in the present case involved a matter of great interest, as connected with the privileges of that House. It was whether it was competent to a Peer of Parliament to interfere with elections, by becoming a petitioner against the return of a Member of that House. The question arose upon two petitions presented against the late return for the borough of Belfast. The first of these petitions was from Lord Ennishowen, and the other from the same noble Lord and Archibald Hamilton, one of the electors of Belfast; but the noble Lord was the only person who had entered into recognizances to proceed with that petition. The circumstances of the case were new; he had not been able to find, upon inquiry, or by his own research, anything like it. Cases of the present kind were to be decided by principles which were familiar to them, and little doubt could be entertained as to the course it was necessary to pursue. At the late election for Belfast, the Earl of Belfast, then a commoner, and the eldest son of a Peer, was the unsuccessful candidate. There was no doubt it was competent to the noble Lord to come to the House and petition either that the return be amended, or that the election be voided. But, in the present instance, immediately after the return, and before any election petition was presented, the noble Lord was called to the House of Peers by the title of Baron Ennishowen and Carrickfergus. It was clear that when the Earl of Belfast was called to the Upper House, he was entirely disqualified from being an elector, and he could have no personal interest in elections, and any interference would be a breach of their privileges. They were all familiar with the sessional orders which were passed every session, and which were the same now as at the time of the act of William. The order which had been just read, stated,

> "That it is a high infringement of the liberties and privileges of the Commons of the United Kingdom for any Lord of Parliament, or other Peer or Prelate, not being a Peer of Ireland at the time elected, and not having declined to serve for any county, city, or borough of Great Britain, to concern himself in the election of Members to serve for the Commons in Parliament, except only any peer of Ireland, at such elections in Great Britain respectively, where such peer shall appear as a candidate, or by himself, or any others, be proposed to be elected."

There might be some doubt as to the correct interpretation of that order; whether it referred merely to the period of election. But if hon. Members would look to the circumstances of the present case, they would see, that the order applied to it; for it was plain, that if a party applied to that House for the purpose of avoiding an election, what did he, but concern himself in that election? Lord Belfast, having been a candidate, could no doubt have petitioned against the return before he became a Peer, but he had little doubt, that he could not petition, now that he had become a Peer, for it would be an infringement of their privileges. The moment he was made a Peer, the ground was cut from under him. This appeared to him to be a matter of importance to the House, and it was necessary, that it should be determined, and he was anxious, that the House should come to a decision on the point without delay. He thought it right to say, that the decision of the House could make no difference whatever with respect to the inquiry into the last election, because there was another petition presented from the electors, which was a good and valid petition, and, therefore, there was not the least necessity for Lord Belfast, now created an English Peer, to come forward with his petition, for an investigation must take place. He had felt himself called upon to direct the attention of the House to the subject, as he had often been connected with proceedings before election committees of that House, and had devoted much attention to the rules and privileges of that House, and he could not help thinking, that this was a subject well worthy of consideration, but he did not desire to press the subject more than the House might think the case required. The House could not be too jealous of its privileges, which were granted, not for the benefit of the Members themselves, but for that of the country. He should conclude with proposing, that the petition of Lord Ennishowen, and the second petition of Lord Ennishowen and Archibald Hamilton, for with regard to this petition, the noble Lord was the only person who had entered into a security, should not be referred to the General Committee of Elections.

Mr. *Rigby Wason* thought, that this was peculiarly a case for the determination of the general committee, for if the House was to take up questions of this kind, its time would be too much occupied to attend to much other business. He believed, that he knew a case which went *pari passu* with the case alluded to by the hon. and learned Member. In that case, the petitioners had entered into recognizances, and had paid witnesses for their attendance. He considered it would be extremely inconvenient if the House were to take cognizance of these cases. He repeated, that the proper place for considering them was in committee, and he considered it would be extremely irregular for the House to interfere in the present instance. If the petition were referred to the committee, and that committee found, that the petitioner was not qualified to present a petition, the committee would report, that there was no valid petition against the return, and the sitting Members would be declared duly elected.

Mr. *M. J. O'Connell* considered, that if there was anything informal in the proceeding, it would be better to refer it to the general committee. As some doubt seemed to be entertained on this point, he would suggest, that the debate be adjourned.

Sir *George Clerk* observed, that the act of Parliament declared, that the petitions should be taken in the order in which they stood on the list; therefore, the petitioners, who were electors, would still have their case taken in the regular order. The present, however, was a perfectly novel case. He believed, that on a reference to the journals, no case could be found in which an unsuccessful candidate at an election, who had presented a petition against the return to the House, had been called up to the House of Peers, in the interim between the presentation and the trial of the petition. But there were several instances of the qualifications of candidates having been under the consideration of the House and the committee, which, though not exactly the same, bore a strong analogy to the present case. In the Honiton case, the election having been declared void, and no special report having been made to the House, the candidate returned at the previous election, went down to the second election, and was defeated; he then became a petitioner. There was nothing on the face of the petition which would disqualify him from being a petitioner; but the House inquired whether he was disqualified or no. In the same way, in another election, notice was given, that the qualifications should be the question, and the committee went into the merits of the case, before they allowed him to go before the House. That applied to cases where nothing appeared on the face of the petition. In the Carmarthen election in 1803, there were three petitioners, stated to be freeholders in the county of Carmarthen, but it did not appear, on the face of the petition, that they were entitled to vote; the House had, however;

referred the petition to the committee, and, in other cases, the House considered whether the disqualification of the electors was sufficient, showing, that the character of the petitioner should be declared by the House. Could there be any doubt, that George Chichester, Earl of Belfast, Baron Ennishowen, had been a candidate for the representation of Belfast, being then a commoner? Was it possible, that Lord Ennishowen could appear before the House in the character of a petitioner? He would ask the House what course it would adopt, when a person had petitioned against a Peer? Would the House allow that Peer to go before them and defend himself? Certainly not. If the person petitioned against, is called to the other House, he was not allowed to appear before the committee; and if this objection appears on the face of the petition itself, it was clear that it could not be referred to the committee. If there was no other petition, except that signed by the noble Lord and the elector, it could only be taken as the petition of that individual elector himself. He, therefore, thought that this was an entirely new case, and that the House would be establishing a very dangerous precedent, if it, for the first time, referred to the committee a petition that bore on the face of it that it was signed by, and was the petition of a Member of the other House of Parliament. He should certainly vote for the motion of his hon. and learned Friend, that the petition be not referred to the committee.

Mr. *Roebuck* wished to have the petition again read, that they might see how the case really stood. No one in that House had hitherto declared that he knew that the petitioner, Lord Ennishowen, was a Member of the other House of Parliament,

Petition read.

Mr. *Roebuck* would put it to his hon. and learned Friend who had brought forward the motion, whether there was anything in the words of that petition which ought not to go before the committee. He wanted to know what there was in that petition to show that the petitioner was a Peer of the realm. It was stated, in the petition that he was a commoner, and there was nothing in the petition to show that he was not a commoner still. As there was no evidence of that kind, there was no reason yet shown why the petition should not be referred to the committee.

Sir *G. Clerk* said, that that House was cognisant of the journals of the House of Lords, and of the *Gazette*, both of which showed that Lord Ennishowen had been called to the Peerage.

Mr. *Roebuck* said, that in that case the proper course would be to adjourn the discussion until the journals of the House of Lords or the *Gazette* had been consulted.

An Hon. *Member*, wished to put it to the Speaker whether the point at issue might not be decided by the committee.

The *Speaker* said, the question for the House to decide was, whether the petition of Lord Ennishowen and Carrickfergus, was such a breach of the privileges of the House as to prevent its being received. He apprehended that being a question of privilege, the House ought to decide it, and that a question of privilege could not be referred to a committee. He wished to call the attention of the House to a clause in the act which had reference to this subject. That clause provided, that no election petition should be received by the House, unless signed by some person claiming the right to vote at the election, to have been elected thereat, or alleging himself to have been a candidate.

Mr. *Watson* said, this case required the most serious consideration, because they were about to establish a precedent, and he would therefore suggest that a search be made for precedents, in order that they might proceed upon safe ground. There were two classes who had a right to petition the House—one, the rejected candidate at the election, or the person who described himself to have been a candidate, the other, the electors. According to the petition, Lord Ennishowen had a right to present himself as a candidate, and had a right to be elected and returned, and the case fell distinctly within the Act of Parliament. The question then arose, whether, by being removed to the upper House, he had lost the right to dispute what the petition described as an improper return. The present motion had certainly taken many hon. Members by surprise, and he had been told, not more than half an hour ago, by Mr. Cockburn, one of the counsel in the case, that the matter would not come on for a fortnight. He wished to make one suggestion to the House. Lord Ennishowen was a petitioner, and was within the clause of the Act of Parliament. Ought he not, therefore, to be heard by counsel at the Bar? Amongst other things bribery was alleged, and might be proved. If the matter was to be fairly investigated, he thought the noble Earl ought to have some notice on the point. At all events, further time ought to be given for the consideration of the question.

Sir *R. Peel* thought the House could not come to any satisfactory decision at the present moment. The time of hon. Members had been so much occupied with other subjects, that many of them had not paid sufficient attention to this subject, and he freely admitted that he could not at present give a vote with any satisfaction to his own mind. Recollecting that the great object of the election law, was to keep questions relating to elections out of the House, he certainly should feel considerable anxiety in voting on this matter. Considering that this was the first question of this nature which had arisen since the passing of the act which the House had been called upon to decide by a majority, he hoped the hon. and learned Member would postpone the motion, to afford an opportunity of ascertaining whether any precedents could be found bearing on the subject, or whether there were any analogous cases.

Mr. *V. Smith* said, that there existed an additional reason for the postponement of the question, for, in point of fact, no notice of it had been given. So little was known of the matter, that even one of the hon. Gentlemen who was to have been sworn on the committee was absent when the others were sworn. It was quite impossible that the House could come to a just conclusion at present, and it appeared to him (Mr. Smith) that no person except the learned Member who had brought forward the question, and the Secretary to the Treasury, with whom no doubt there was a communication upon the subject, knew of the course taken upon the present occasion.

Mr. *Thesiger* had no wish to press the matter too hastily on the attention of the House, because it was of great importance, and ought to be seriously and gravely considered. Some hon. Gentlemen stated that the House had been taken by surprise, and, therefore, he (Mr. Thesiger) thought it necessary to state that on Monday last he distinctly gave notice that at the time of referring the petition to the general committee on elections, he should call the attention of the House to two petitions which had been presented by a Peer of Parliament, in violation of the privileges of the House.

Debate adjourned.

CORN-LAWS—MINISTERIAL PLAN—ADJOURNED PROCEEDINGS (THIRD DAY).] On the Order of the Day for resuming the adjourned debate being read,

Mr. *E. Buller* said, that the credit he was willing to bestow upon the declaration of hon. Members opposite in general, that they supported the proposition of the right hon. Baronet from a conviction that it would benefit the country, he could not bestow upon the hon. Member for Aylesbury; who, while he professed his attachment to that proposition, declared that it would lower the profits of the agriculturist to the extent of 20 per cent. Now he confessed, that as a landed proprietor, and in his anxiety for the general prosperity of the country and the welfare of all classes in it, he should oppose the proposition of the right hon. Baronet, because it was his firm conviction, that all the supplies we could obtain from every quarter of the world, not even excluding Hamburgh, would not countervail the growing numbers and the growing wealth of the country. The consumption of this country might be estimated at 26,000,000 quarters for 26,000,000 of people. Now, of that quantity of corn 1,000,000 quarters at least were, on the average of the fourteen years, annually imported into this country, and considering that according to the rate with which our population was increasing, it would be 3,000,000 or 4,000,000 more than it now was in ten years, he thought it not too much to suppose that we should then really require more corn from abroad than we could find it easy to obtain, and certainly much more than could be supplied by home growth. He was delighted that they had at last received some tidings from Tamboff—tidings by which the ghost of Tamboff had been laid; for, after all that had been said of the enormous quantity of wheat which we might derive from that quarter, it appeared that the surplus produce of that province amounted, not to millions, but to 21,235 quarters. He did not admit that the present Corn-laws were an impious violation of the decrees of Providence, or that they were the sole cause of all the misery that at present existed in the country. But he did believe, that under all circumstances, they were highly injurious to the country; that in times of prosperity they impeded the advancement of that prosperity; and that in times of distress, they aggravated that distress. While he believed, that he was also satisfied, whatever might be our state of prosperity, that under existing circumstances, the interruption of our trade in the Mediterranean, and of our relations with China, the peculiarity of our position with regard to America, and the influence which the failures on that continent had upon the commerce of this country—that under these combined circumstances, let our prosperity be what it might, it was impossible that the poorer classes of this country could be otherwise than in a state of suffering. Still less did he join in what had also been said at his side of the House, that the measures of the right hon. Baronet was an insult to the starving people of England. He believed that the right hon. Baronet deeply deplored the distress which existed in the country, and that he was desirous of doing everything in his power to alleviate it. There were gifts which ought not to be considered with regard to their amount, or the result that followed, but be appreciated on account of their motives with which they originated. He gave the right hon. Baronet credit for desiring to alleviate the sufferings of the people, and his measure he valued as the smallest measure of relief ever offered by a Minister of the Crown to the expectations of an anxious people. He lamented the straitened circumstances of the right hon. Baronet, for it was those, he believed, which precluded him from giving to the country a measure of greater relief. The right hon. Baronet said, that the price which he wished to maintain, as affording ample protection on the one hand, and sufficient relief on the other, was between 54*s*. and 58*s*.; but he could understand why it was that the right hon. Baronet, with these views, laid upon the table a scale of duties which he (Mr. Buller) was satisfied the framer of it intended should have the effect of raising the price to 66*s*., and which, in his (Mr. Buller's) own opinion, would have the effect of raising it to 73*s*. There was a very great discrepancy between the speech of the right hon. Baronet and his plan. The right hon. Baronet said he was the decided advocate of a sliding scale, but when he looked at the right hon. Baronet's scale, and saw in it the novelty of what he called a resting scale, he could not refrain from thinking that the right hon. Baronet was a convert to the principle of a fixed duty. That resting scale was, in fact, a fixed duty within narrow limits. Aware of the evils of fluctuation, the right hon. Baronet introduced this rest to meet the objections which existed against a complete sliding scale when the price rose beyond what was considered necessary for the protection of the home grower. He introduced it with the expectation that when the price of corn should rise to 56*s*. foreign corn would then be readily imported at a duty of 16*s*., but he thought the right hon. Baronet would in that be disappointed. He thought that the inherent difficulty of a sliding scale was, that it invariably held out to those who were in possession of corn in bond an artificial inducement to hold it in bond; and although the right hon. Baronet, no doubt, reduced that inducement by the proposal which he submitted to the House, still, he did so in so slight a degree, and left still so strong an inducement to the owners of corn in bond, to keep it there whenever the price was rising, that he could only regard the right hon. Baronet's proposition as a mitigated mischief. Although the inducement to hold corn in bond, in the expectation of obtaining a larger price, was greater under the present system than that proposed by the right hon. Baronet, yet the danger was also greater. Under the present system a greater risk was run in retaining the corn in bond than there would be under the proposed plan, a risk which almost entirely counteracted the difference in the extent of the inducement. Another point to which he desired to refer was what the right hon. Baronet styled the "rest." Now, there might be no doubt as to the excellence of the intentions of those who proposed it, but nevertheless he could not see what was the object of this strange device. Neither could he understand why this rest, as it was called, was fixed at the period when the duty was at 18*s*. It seemed to him that there were excellent reasons why the rest should not have been so fixed; 18*s*. was as effectual a prohibition as 20*s*., and if, therefore, the rest at this point was not intended to create an additional obstruction to the free or cheap import, he must draw the conclusion that it was inserted for ornament rather than for use. The right hon. Gentleman seemed very fastidious about these rests. He was not satisfied with one of them. He must have a rest at the top as well as at the bottom of the scale, the former being used, as he (Mr. Buller) supposed, rather for the sake of uniformity than anything else. With regard to the rest at 66*s*., he must say, that if the originators of it thought that it would cause the introduction of corn into the country at the 6*s*. rate of duty, he believed that they would in the end find themselves grievously disappointed in their expectations. Besides, the price of 66*s*. per quarter was never obtained, except when the produce of the year was insufficient, and then, as experience proved, the *maximum* price of 73*s*. a quarter was almost sure to be reached. If he was right on this point, and he did not state it on light grounds, the effect of the scale would be to force up prices. For his own part, he believed that would be the effect, and if it were, he called on the Government to show how, or in what manner, their new proposition would tend to the advantage of the consumer. He had looked at the scale in all its points, and he owned he could not see where that advantage was. Then, 150 towns were to be added to the list of those from which the averages were taken. He gave the right hon. Baronet every credit for the integrity of his motives in proposing to add those towns, and in making their selection, but he was strongly of opinion that the result would be to lower prices, and, consequently, to increase the stringency of the measure. Then there were other obstacles offered to the consumer. The supply from Canada was to be intercepted. A duty was to be put upon all American wheat coming across the Canadian border, and so by the St. Lawrence to the British market. There was a great peculiarity about this proposition. The Government were pledged, most solemnly pledged, to the principle of the sliding scale. Yet in this measure they introduced the principle of a fixed duty, for they proposed to take an unvarying duty of 3*s*. upon all American wheat and flour imported into the Canadian territory. Why was this? Why did the Government depart from their principle in this matter? The reasons for a fixed duty in the Canadas were the same as for a fixed duty in England. The seasons varied as greatly there as here. The price fluctuated as much there as here. Did the Government purpose to regulate the seasons and the prices in Canada? Could they influence the seasons more potently across the Atlantic than at home? Had they greater sway over prices in America than in Europe? On the contrary, he had the authority of a Member of the Cabinet, the right hon. the Home Secretary, for saying that prices and seasons were no more to be governed in Canada than in England, that they were equally liable to variations, equally impossible to guard against. In a speech the Home Secretary had made on this subject, in 1839, he had referred to the quotations of American flour as given in a work called the *American Almanack.* He had contrasted the prices of corn in that country at different times. In 1834, he said, it was five dollars a barrel; in 1835, it was at four dollars a barrel; and in 1817, it was thirteen dollars a barrel. The right hon. Baronet then made use of the following remarkable words, quoted from the same publication:—

> "There is nothing in the history of the Corn-law prices in this country, to compare with the violent fluctuations which the whole American table exhibits."

Why, then, he would ask, if they must have a fixed duty in Canada, not have also a fixed duty in England? Was it because the Government wanted to test the efficacy of the measure? Was it because they desired to try the effect of the system, and had selected Canada for the purpose of making their experiment? He believed, there must be something of this sort going forward, or else there was a great inconsistency, to say the least of it, in the conduct of the Government. Looking to the value of this measure, he must say, that he was at a loss to form a just calculation concerning it. He was not lost in amazement at the magnitude of the proposition, but lost in the minuteness of the calculation as to the benefits it would give to the people. A noble Lord, whom he did not see in his place (Lord Stanley) had calculated last year, the smallness of the reduction in the poor man's savings, provided the measure of the then Administration had been adopted for relieving the people from the sugar monopoly. He would now give the noble Lord another arithmetical problem, which he trusted he would solve prior to addressing the House upon this question, He would beg of him to calculate the difference arising to the consumer upon the price of the 4lb. loaf under the old system of duties, and under the scale now proposed by her Majesty's Government. It would be, he thought, infinitesimal; something like a negative quantity.

It was true, the scheme was not unopposed. It was true, that Oxford grumbled—it was true, that Buckingham growled—it was true, that Lincoln was in roaring rank rebellion—

> "Heathcote himself and such large acred men,
> Lords of fat E'sham or of Lincoln fen,
> And all those wights, that fondly call their own
> Half that the Devil o'erlooks from Lincoln town."

—all these—all the agriculturists of the kingdom were up in arms—they threatened to undo to day, what they had done yesterday—they threatened to unmake what they had made—to destroy a Cabinet they themselves had formed—a Cabinet which had issued from their loins, and which, six months back, they deemed the very epitome of Ministerial excellence. Although he condemned the measure, he took their rage as an earnest of some good. He looked at any proposition to alter what had existed, as a proof, that some ray of light, however feeble, had gleamed upon the Government. Perhaps we might hope for better things. Our greatest blessings were gradual. The revival of learning itself was gradual. The darkness of the age was not all at once dispelled by the sudden burst of the glorious sunshine of a second Augustan era—

> Old Chaucer, like the morning star,
> To us discovers day from far;
> His light those mists and clouds dissolv'd,
> Which our dark nation long involv'd;
> But he descending to the shades,
> Darkness again the age invades.
> Next, like Aurora, Spenser rose,
> Whose purple blush the day foreshows."

It was pleasant to see the morning star arise in the shape of a change in the system, however trivial; it was pleasant to think that Aurora blushed as she rose, the forerunner of an embryo day—that rest in the scale which was, no doubt, an embryo fixed duty. Yes, hon. Gentlemen might rely on it that this rest was the germ of the blossom which would some day, sooner or later, bud forth in the shape of a fixed duty on corn; and he was no true prophet, also, if the House did not find that the point at which that duty would be fixed would be 6s. Well, then, there was the morning star in the person of the right hon. Premier; and after him blushed the sweet Aurora, the right hon. Gentleman, the Member for East Kent, and then came another herald of the morn in the person of the Home Secretary. He came before them under very auspicious circumstances. He had consulted Mr. Hubbard, and Mr. Hubbard had carried such conviction to his mind, that he really quite agreed with him in every point except one. Nay, so very anxious had the right hon. Gentleman been to get into Mr. Hubbard's book, that he had, according to his own confession, absolutely overlooked the title page, and even the name of the author himself, although it was one that was very familiar to most people, even in their cradles. As the right hon. Gentleman had quoted Mr. Hubbard for his purpose, so would he quote Mr. Hubbard for his:—

> "The failure of the harvest of 1816, says Mr. Hubbard, not only in this country, but upon the continent; the general scarcity which ensued; the unusual precautions taken by the continental Governments in prohibiting exportation, and, as in France, offering bounties upon importation (by which wheat was actually drawn from this country at the enormous price of 115s. per quarter), all these circumstances would doubtless have rendered extraordinary measures necessary, and have required the suspension of the fixed duty, had there been one. Still the suspension would have been called for, rather to counteract the results of foreign temporary enactments, then to remedy any defect in our own fiscal regulations. Such circumstances may occur again; but a quarter of a century has elapsed without their return, and shall we refuse to legislate upon a gainful, sound, and equitable system, because this minute possibility exists? As well might we abrogate the Habeas Corpus Act, because possibly a rebellion might occur which would require its temporary suspension."

It would be certainly quite as reasonable to fix on a sliding scale for the purpose of adjusting the operation of the Habeas Corpus Act as for the purpose of adjusting the Corn-law. Why not measure sedition, privy conspiracy, and rebellion, by a sliding scale? Why not regulate the Trial by Jury by a sliding scale? The one would be just as sound in principle, and just as much warranted by necessity, as the other. But he had said enough to show his decided hostility to this scale. He could not sit down, however, without adding that he did feel most deeply that something ought to be done for the settlement of the question. In his opinion the principle on which a decision should be come to should be to consult the interests of the home grower up to a certain point, and after that to consult the interests of the consumer; and if it could be shown that the sliding scale was essentially necessary for the success of agriculture, then he would say, maintain it up to the necessary point, and no further. If, however, it could be proved, as he thought it could, that the sliding scale was opposed to the interests of the consumer, then he would say, do away with the sliding scale altogether. These were the points of principle by which he would regulate his measure. With regard to the terms, the prices, the rates of duty, &c., those were matters of detail which might be made subjects of consideration. But he had already pressed too long on the consideration of the House; he would, therefore, conclude by thanking them for their kind indulgence, and assuring them that in what he had said he had only endeavoured to argue for truth.

Sir *W. James* observed that while the noble Lord at the head of the Opposition had denounced the right hon. Baronet's measure as an aggravation of former evils, the hon. Gentleman who just spoke had performed a sort of scanty justice in calling the measure a mitigated mischief and a widow's mite. The speech of the hon. Member was not different from the speeches of other hon. Gentlemen on the same side of the House in representing the distress of the manufacturing districts in glowing, but, in his opinion, exaggerated terms. The hon. Member had talked of Tamboff, and the exaggerated statements made by the noble Lord, the Secretary of the Colonies, with respect to it; but it must be conceded, from the fertility of the American states near the Ohio, which had been described in such glowing terms by the noble Lord the Member for London, that the British farmers would have but little chance of competing with them if corn was admitted at the low duty advocated by hon. Gentlemen opposite. He conceived the real question to be, whether any protection should be afforded to agriculture, and if so, to what amount. They had begun at the wrong end. They were now discussing what protection should be given to agriculture, and when it was decided that that protection would be best afforded by a sliding scale, the hon. Member for Wolverhampton would come and ask them to take away all protection whatever. The consequence was, that confusion was introduced into their debates, and two questions mixed together which ought to be kept distinct. The error into which hon. Gentlemen had fallen seemed to him almost inseparable from the circumstances of the case. That there should be protection to agriculture he thought the thinking part of the people of England, had decided. No one could have more respect than he had for public opinion, but the difficulty was to know what the public opinion was. On the whole (and taking it with all its faults he loved it still), he did not know how any fairer representation of public opinion could be taken than the returns to that House. He thought it might be fairly argued that the sound, moderate, and enlightened part of the public opinion was in favour of protection to agriculture. Upon these grounds he should be most willing to leave the question, had not Gentlemen entered largely into it who had preceded him. The hon. Member for Coventry had interspersed his speech with abuse upon the landlords, and the hon. Member for Sheffield had talked of their cobweb interests and their flimsy selfishness. Protection had been given to the landed interest for the last 500 years, and that that had been done with success, he thought was plain from the statements of Mr. M'Culloch himself. The value of agricultural produce since 1774 had increased in this country to a greater extent than her whole taxation. It was impossible to look at the state of the country, without seeing that there was no favour extended to any one class in preference to another, and that there was no favoured interest. "Land and trade," said Sir Josiah Childe, a high authority on such a subject, "Land and trade are twins, and must ever wax and wane together. Land cannot flourish but trade will feel it, and trade cannot fall but land will fall also." This had been quoted so often, that it had become a truism; but when he perceived that hon. Gentlemen on both sides the House, and in each interest, had, during the course of the present debate attempted to depreciate the importance of the interests to which they were opposed, he thought it was a truism of which many hon. Members ought to be reminded. There was another point to which he would allude, that of independence of foreign supply. He would not deny that, to a certain extent, we were dependent upon foreigners, but still he contended that every endeavour should be made to avoid being as little dependent upon foreigners as possible for the staple food of the country. Agriculture had always been considered infinitely preferable to trade or commerce. The noble Lord had said that there was no authority but Malthus, who had advocated an independence of foreign supply. Now, he contended that Adam Smith was also an authority in favour of that position. He said, that trade was, in addition to the danger from the winds and the waves, exposed to danger from the folly and injustice of absurd laws. He did not think it would be prudent of this country to give up the idea of being in most years independent to a certain extent of a foreign supply. Besides the land bore exclusive burdens. ["*No,*" "*What?*"] The land-tax, the county tax, and the bulk of the Poor-rates were borne by the land. If that were not the case, he would be prepared to go to a Committee of Inquiry, as proposed by the hon. Member for Sheffield. Considering also the various ways in which protection was afforded to the manufactures, he thought it was undeniably no more than fair to give some protection to the agriculturists. (The hon. Member then read from the returns a list of the various articles of manufacture which were protected by a duty, and also of some articles of agricultural and colonial produce which were protected by duties.) Now, as the right hon. Baronet, the First Lord of the Treasury, had said, if the duty on corn were entirely abolished, it would be necessary to alter our fiscal system. If the protection were taken off corn, it could not be continued upon linens, cottons, and the like. He should like to know, if such were the case, how they could raise the revenue, and pay the national debt? He did not believe it would be possible. Mr. Deacon Hume had said that if they repealed the duty on corn, they ought to repeal it on all others simultaneously. He had heard a great deal of talk about the distress in the country, and the effect of the Corn-laws on it; he did not deny that they might have had some effect on the distress of the country, but that other concurrent and concomitant causes had a much greater effect. There was one cause mentioned by the right hon. Baronet, which he believed had a great effect, it was the war with China, and the disturbance of the monetary system of America; the over-issue of paper currency, and the over-trading and speculating which occurred in 1838 were other causes; and it appeared to him that the over-issue of paper money and derangement of the currency resulted from there not being a sufficient regulation with regard to country bankers. The hon. Gentlemen opposite had represented this as the landlords question, and not as the question of the farmer's and labourer's. That appeared to him to originate from the fallacy that rent did not enter into the cost of production. That had been stated about the same time by Mr. Malthus, Mr. Ricardo, and a barrister named West; it was quite evident, however, that rent did enter into the cos of production. In the price of every article, there were three shares; first, the labourer's share, then the capitalist's share, and then the proprietor's share. Take cotton for example; there was the labourer's share, the manufacturer's share, and the grower's share, and so it might be argued with respect to land. There was the labourer's share, the share of the farmer, and also the share of the landlord, who is the proprietor of the raw material. Rent did therefore enter just enter just as much into the cost of production as other articles; and he could not understand the reasons alleged by those who argued on the other side. This measure he thought, therefore, was calculated to benefit not so much the landed proprietor as the farmer and the labourer. Now, with regard to a sliding scale as compared with a fixed duty, it was impossible for any person to look attentively into the subject, and not see the great advantage of a sliding scale. To a certain extent he admitted that there might also be advantages in a fixed duty; but he could not abandon the sliding scale. In the first place, when corn was very low, a fixed duty gave no protection to the farmer; for what protection could a fixed duty of 6*s.* or 8*s.* be to the farmer, when the price of corn at Elsinore was 25*s.* or 30*s.*? In framing a sliding scale, the best principle appeared to be, to make the duty as gradual as possible, and if there was any rest, to make it as near as possible to the centre. He had seen a project for a sliding scale, framed by a gentleman named Thorpe, which retained a fixed duty between 50*s.* and 60*s.*, and a sliding scale at each end of it. He thought the idea was not a bad one, as it made the level as large, and the ascent and descent as gradual as possible, and would, perhaps, be more beneficial to the farmer, and still more to the importer than the plan of the right hon. Baronet; still he accepted that plan as a great boon to the agricultural interest, and he might state that he had received from his constituents the most satisfactory and flattering accounts of it. The hon. Gentleman read an extract from a letter approving particularly of the improved mode of taking the averages, and proceeded to say, that, under the present system, it was only the strong men, the men of great capital, who made fortunes; the small traders, and men of small capital, were frequently ruined. He was, unfortunately, aware of many instances in the town he had the honour to represent of persons who had declared themselves to have been ruined by the operation of the present scale of duties, while others had made large and flourishing fortunes. He stated facts that must be well known to every Member of that House who had paid any attention to the subject; but as he had said before, he was sure that all moderate, and practical, and thinking men would consider the measure of the right hon. Baronet as a great boon. The noble Lord on the opposite side of the House described the proposed scheme as a measure which conceded without conciliating. He was very glad of that, because it was too much the fashion for the Conservatives to conciliate without thinking of justice. Conservatives conceded sometimes for the sake of conciliation and not for the sake of justice, but he was convinced that the proposed measure had been made not alone for the love of conciliation, but that it was made for the benefit of the public, and from the pure love of justice to all parties. He was convinced it would promote the interests of all classes of the country, and not of any particular class. If there was any proof of that wanted, it might be had by looking at the extreme views taken up by those who were opposed to the present measure. There were first the farmers of Boston, who say that the proposed rate of duty is a great deal too low; and on the other hand, there were the gentlemen of the Anti-Corn-law Conference who think that it is a great deal too high. Now, if there was anything in the old maxim that virtue was a mean between good and evil, he unhesitatingly said that the scheme proposed by her Majesty's Ministers was the very best that could be devised; and as such it should have his most earnest and hearty support.

Mr. *R. Bernal* said, he had been surprised to hear the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster on the previous night revive the old fallacy that cheap bread implied low wages. He must tell that hon. Member that the price of bread depended on the rate of wages, and that in no case whatever did the rate of wages depend on the price of bread. In 1835 the price of bread was 1*d.* a pound, and wages did not fall. In 1840 the price of bread was double, yet wages did not rise. The hon. Member had asked, supposing there were a saving of 2*d.* on the quartern loaf, into whose pockets would it go? The answer was this: the cost of wheat to the consumers of this country in 1835 was 32,000,000*l.*; in 1840 the same article cost 54,000,000*l.*, leaving a surplus of 22,000,000*l.*, which, of course, the consumers spent in clothes, and the manufacturer and the whole community were satisfied. This was a sufficient refutation of the fallacy of the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster. Too much stress had been laid on the analogy attempted to be drawn between the comparative habits and comforts of the Englishman and the foreigner. From our extensive commerce and high degree of civilization, we had established a maximum of comfort, and therefore a foreign statesman might as well endeavour to prove, that because the labourer in other countries used wine as a common beverage, he must be better off than the Englishman, who only drank beer. He could not think any analogy could fairly be drawn between the two, even supposing the statistics quoted by the right hon. Baronet were founded in fact. He believed it was only since the beginning of the reign of George 3rd. when the steam-engine and the spinning-jenny came into play, and gave a new impetus to agriculture, that this country had become what it was, and the population had been wheat fed. He was surprised at the faint praise which had throughout this debate been bestowed on machinery. Delusion seemed to prevail to a considerable extent upon this point, and it reminded him that in 1812, when corn was at 66*s.* per quarter, the Luddites arose and visited upon machinery the real grievance which arose from the high price of provisions. The hon. Member for Knaresborough had, the other night, in a somewhat bombastic vein, thrown down the gauntlet to the gentlemen representing the commercial and manufacturing interests, saying, like Bombastes in the tragedy,

> "Thus do I challenge all the human race!"

Among his many assertions—his many "rattling" assertions, to use the hon. Member's own phrase—there was one which he used which, if capable of proof, would very much influence the vote he should give to-night. The hon. Member averred that the petitions which had been presented to that House in favour of a repeal of the Corn-laws were for the most part forgeries. The petitions presented amounted to 1,033, and the signatures to 259,939. Why then should an accusation of so sweeping a character be made against such a number of petitioners upon mere speculation, or as a vent for idle declamation? The right hon. Baronet in bringing forward his scheme had expressed his conviction that the agriculturists as a body were in favour of some change in the present system; he, on the contrary, maintained that the farmers were opposed to any modification of the Corn-laws. If, indeed, this were not the fact, why had the noble Duke (of Buckingham), who was supposed to represent the agricultural interest in this kingdom, quitted the Cabinet of the right hon. Baronet? He hoped that some of the numerous Members in that House who were supposed to have peculiar connexions with that noble Duke would afford some satisfactory explanation upon this interesting point. He had the honour to represent a borough in Bucks not yet absorbed by the noble Duke, and the impression certainly prevailed among his constituents that there had been a good deal of coquetry between the right Baronet and the noble Duke to whom he alluded; and as the hon. Member for Staffordshire had thought fit to quote poetry, he might be allowed to say the whole circumstances connected with the retirement of the noble Duke strongly reminded him of the lines,—

> "So sweetly she bade him adieu,
> "That I thought she bade him return."

Hon. Members opposite were in the habit of appealing to the returns at the last election; but it seemed to be convenient for them to forget their speeches at the hustings. He had been present at many of the elections, and he would venture to assert, that whatever might be said now about the alleged willingness of the agricultural body to see a change in the present system, wherever a Conservative had been returned, he was pledged to maintain the Corn-law in its pristine deformity, and to alter the Poor-law. The right hon. Baronet took now a very different view of protection from that which he maintained in 1828, when Mr. Hume brought forward his motion for a fixed duty. He denied that land was subject to any peculiar burdens; but if it could be made out that the agriculturists were taxed more than any other class of the community, he should vote for such amount of protection as would repay them.

Mr. *Scott* said, that he represented a county which was not only pre-eminently distinguished by the intelligence of the practical farmers who cultivated its soil, but was also distinguished as containing within its limits divers thriving manufacturing towns; and he thought the hon. Gentlemen who had just sat down, had gone too far in saying that he and other Gentlemen, representing similar constituencies, were sent for the mere purpose of maintaining the law in its pristine deformity. He knew, from communications received from his constituents since the announcement of the right hon. Baronet's measure, that his scheme was one which was entirely satisfactory to the great body of his constituents. When this plan was brought forward in contradistinction to that of the late Government, the question which we ought to ask ourselves was, whether we should depend upon ourselves for the sustenance of an increasing population, or whether we should resort to foreign nations for the supply; or whether we should get what we could first from our own agriculturists, and then take what we wanted from abroad; whether, in short, we should depend upon our friends; or upon those who were our present rivals, and might be our future foes. Believing as he did, that in ordinary years the country could maintain itself, and that in extraordinary years it could do so too, if agriculture were supported, he doubted the policy of depending upon foreign supplies. The measure of the late Government was held out as a means of diminshing the natural fluctuations of supply, and augmenting the comforts of the whole body of the community. If that were the case, the House would certainly act very wrong in withholding its sanction from it; but he thought that many of the arguments by which the supporters of that plan endeavoured to recommend it had received very undue influence. Amongst the evils attributed to the existing Corn-laws, was the derangement of the currency; but that derangement had occurred at a time prior to the period when the Corn-laws could have had any injurious effect upon the currency. The circulation between 1833 and 1836, that is, in two years and a half, had increased 4,000,000*l.*, on account of other issues than those of the Bank of England. He found that in 1833 there were ten joint-stock banks, with 107 branches, and a circulation of 1,315,498*l.*; and in 1836, there were twenty-five joint-stock banks, with 550 branches, and a circulation of 4,258,097*l.* It appeared to him that when we considered not only that the circulation was thus affected by the joint-stock banks, but also by the displacing of currency to the amount of 4,000,000*l.*, there was enough to account for the embarrassment and distress which prevailed in the country. It could not be said, at that time, that the Corn-laws were the cause of the evil, because we had then a plentiful supply of corn at home, and were not dependent upon a foreign supply; and if the Corn-laws had not then caused the evil, how could the removal of them now cure it? The noble Viscount, lately at the head of the Government, had said that, alter the Corn-laws as we would, he did not believe foreign nations would take one bale the more of manufactured goods from us. He would remind the House of what had been said by Burke—that it was not the necessity of the seller, but of the purchaser that raised the price of an article. If, then, we reduced ourselves to the necessity of depending upon foreign nations, they would raise their prices, and study their own advantage and not our convenience. It was argued, that if we altered the Corn-laws, our exports to foreign countries would be greatly increased; but he thought we ought to judge of the future by the past, and if, taking those years when there was large importations of foreign corn, and those in which there was little or none, we found that our exports had gone on steadily increasing in both periods, we might conclude that there was little or no connection between our imports of grain, and our exports to foreign countries. He found that in the year 1829, according to the official returns, the foreign wheat introduced to this country amounted to 6,169,036 quarters, and that the value of the exports in the same period was upwards of 66,000,000*l.* In the year 1832, the exports were 76,000,000*l.* and upwards, showing an increase of 10,000,000*l.* In 1833, the exports were 79,000,000*l.*, and in 1836, 97,000,000*l.*, showing an increase in the latter over the former year of 18,000,000*l.*, whilst the wheat imported from abroad in the interval between the two periods was little more than 6,000,000 of quarters. In the year 1837 there were 85,000,000 of exports, and in 1840 upwards of 116,000,000, showing an increase of 30,000,000*l.* from 1837 to 1840, during which period there was an importation of 7,240,269 quarters of foreign wheat. And yet this last was the period in which we complained that our commerce and manufactures were in a distressed state. All he argued was, that from this it must appear, that the distress existing in the country is not to be imputed to the Corn-law. If reliance were to be placed on the report of Mr. Pabler, it would seem that the annual value of agricultural produce was no less a sum than 250,000,000*l.*, whilst the annual value of the manufacturing produce was 150,000,000*l.* And the same gentleman, in making reference to our exports to foreign countries, during the three years ending 1837, said, that they averaged not less than 48,000,000*l.* a year out of this 150,000,000*l.*; so that there was about one-third exported to foreign countries, whilst the remaining two-thirds of the annual value of our manufacturing produce was consumed at home. Now, he thought it would be very remarkable if we deserted our home market to encourage the foreigner; for if there were any one thing more than another that deserved legislative attention, he thought it was the encouragement of native industry; and he congratulated the House and the country on the introduction of the right hon. Baronet's measure, which, when it passed, he believed would give encouragement to all branches of our public industry. No person could lament the distress existing in various parts of the country more than he did, and he did not desire to underrate it in any way. It was stated last night by the hon. Member for Sheffield (Mr. Ward), that one proof of that distress was the number of uninhabited houses in the manufacturing districts. Now, comparing the population of 1831 with the population of 1841, and the number of occupied houses in the former with the number in the latter year, he found that instead of there being a large increase, there was reason for congratulation that the uninhabited houses were not so many in proportion; for, instead of 198,000, taking the increase of population into the account, they should have amounted to 400,000. This showed that there were more inhabited houses in proportion in 1841 than in 1831. With regard to the causes of the distress, in the evidence of the hon. Member for Stockport, in April, 1840, given before the committee on banks of issue, there was an acknowledgment or admission of "a mania," or madness in the way in which mercantile speculations were carrying on at that time; they had an acknowledgment that there was a mania among the manufacturers in 1836 and 1837, and the hon. Gentleman professed his total ignorance of the influence of the Corn-laws at that time on the operations of the manufacturers. Manufacturers were prosperous in the prior period, they fell into distress in the latter; and the Corn-law was in operation during the period of prosperity as well as in the period of adversity. Therefore he did not see that they could impute any influence to the Corn-law one way or the other. But he did see various other circumstances which might have influenced certain manufacturers in endeavouring to effect a repeal of the Corn-law. The hon. Member for Stockport said, on a former occasion, in this House, that if wages were reduced he would let the people know who were to blame for the reduction, as though hon. Gentlemen on his (Mr. Scott's) side of the House were accountable for the wages in manufacturing districts being reduced. The secret had been disclosed before, for another hon. Member had previously stated that the only way the manufacturers of this country hoped to be able to compete with foreigners was by a reduction of wages to the continental level. At the Derby conference, on the 9th of December last, it was stated by a member of that body, that if the duty on the exportation of machinery were taken off, all the stocking frames would be sent abroad—of course, he added, the English artisans would not go with them, because of the low rate of wages in foreign countries. Why, if they reduced wages in England to the continental level, he did not see what could be the advantage to the operative to remain in this country instead of going to Saxony. He would be just as well off in one country as in the other. The noble Lord, the Member for London (Lord J. Russell) had said that the operative would not be worse off, as he would have much more work; and that he would, in all probability, be as well off with a reduction of wages as at present. He believed, however, that with dear corn and high wages the labourer had more to spend than if corn were reduced in price, and wages were low. If reduced to the continental level, every man who had 15*s.* now would be in the receipt of only 7*s.* 6*d.* then. He regarded the measure of the Government now before the House as calculated to produce steadiness, avoid scarcity, prevent speculation, and, contrary to the measure brought forward by the opposite side of the House, assist the farmer in times of plenty, and provide food for the poor man in periods of scarcity.

Mr. *Hastie* said, he viewed the question before the House in quite a different manner from that in which it had been looked at by any hon. Member who had yet spoken. He would advert to some of the facts of the case. In 1836, the harvest was abundant and corn cheap; that, in 1837, difficulties arose in the commercial world, which sprung out of the difficulties then developing themselves in the monetary system. It would be in the recollection of hon. Members connected with manufactures, that some of these difficulties arose from the numerous engagements of American houses paralysing commercial transactions; but so rapidly did the country relieve itself from this state of things, that it showed that internally all was right, and that nothing existed to impede the natural elasticity of the whole commercial world. But, the succeeding harvest being a scarce one, provisions became dearer, and the people could not purchase other necessaries as well as they would have done had the prices continued as they were before. The years 1833, 1834, 1835, and 1836, were periods at which prices were low, and little or no foreign corn was introduced; but in the following year, owing to a bad harvest, there came a sudden demand for foreign corn, and thus the money market was, with equal suddenness, greatly affected by the demand for bullion with which it was necessary to pay for large importations of grain. And here he must observe that one of the causes of the distress in the commercial world arose from the immense quantity of surplus bills drawn upon this country from Hamburg, and a variety of other ports, for the purchase of grain, which were thrown upon the market, and which caused a fall in the exchanges. The effect of this payment for corn in cash was, that the Bank of England was liable to be drained of bullion to an immense extent. Such a state of things when they arose, compelled the Bank of England to raise the rate of discounts, and thus to affect all the commercial interests, whether in connection with the East and West Indies or elsewhere, which were thus rendered unable to meet the engagements which they had entered into the year before, and had the effect of suddenly forcing large stocks upon the market, causing the fall of prices to the lowest level, and reducing the producers to insolvency and ruin. And such, he maintained, must ever be the consequence of a Corn-law, which had in it a prohibitory duty. The purchases of corn made in the beginning of the year arrived in this country in the months of June, July, and August, the speculator or buyer well knowing that the price must rise to his own estimate, and the whole system of averages was so admirably, contrived that it was quite impossible to prevent the evils which the sliding scale held out to the speculator, whilst corn was let in upon the farmer at *1s.* The privations to which the people of this country were subject no description of his could convey an idea of; and all this had been the result of the present sliding scale. Its tendency was mischievous, for it destroyed our commerce and manufactures, and he should like to know where the landed interest would be when these other great interests should be destroyed. He had listened with the greatest respect and attention, to the speech of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth, and he had indulged in the hope that he should have heard good and forcible reasons given for the adoption of the sliding scale, but in this hope, indeed, he had been grievously disappointed; and what the right hon. Gentleman put forward as the causes of the distress which prevailed appeared to him (Mr. Hastie) to be anything but the right ones. He admitted, that they might be auxiliary causes, but they were of comparatively slight character: the only causes which the right hon. Baronet had stated were the operations of joint-stocks banks, the American difficulties and differences, and the war with China. Now, with regard to the interruption of the trade with China, he begged to state that in the year 1841, there was a larger quantity of cotton goods exported for that market than there had been in the year before, and in 1840 our trade was greater than in 1839. In short, the increase of our trade to that quarter since the trade had been thrown open had gone on increasing; so that this could not be even a tributary cause in placing the trade of the country in its present position. With regard to the United States of America, it was true that there was a deficiency of two or three millions; and it had been truly stated, that in this country's trading with the whole world particular quarters and outlets would be paralysed, and for a short time there would be a decrease on the usual demand; and that fact would naturally affect those trades which looked to the supply of these markets. But, then, taking the general aggregate amount of our export trade, it would be seen that it had gone on increasing year by year; and yet the distress continued. He would take the total amount of the exports of this country for four years—namely, 1838, 1839, 1840, and 1841, and the House would see that there had been a gradual and progressive increase on the whole continent. In the year 1838, the total amount of our export trade was 43,344,630*l.*; in 1839, it was 45,281,252*l.*, being an increase of 1,936,622*l.* [Sir *R. Peel*: Is that the declared value.] Yes. In the year 1840, the amount was 43,959,604*l.* This was less than the previous year, when taken as the declared value only. In the year 1841, the amount was 44,545,535*l.* Now, in the year 1841, it was well known that there was a fall in prices of not less than 10 per cent; and if to the amount stated as the declared value, say, in round numbers, 44,000,000*l.*, they added 10 per cent to that sum, say 4,000,000*l.*, the amount would have reached 48,000,000*l.* and upwards, had prices remained the same as they were in the preceding two years. This fact showed, there had been no falling off in the extent of our exports, but that the difference in value or price was great. The distress had not arisen from a falling off in the foreign trade of this country. In illustration of this, he would state, from documents, the number of manufactured cottons in yards. In the year 1839, they amounted to 731,000,000 yards, the declared value of which was 16,378,000*l.* In 1840, there were 790,600,600 yards of calico exported, the declared value of which was 16,302,000*l.* The quantity of our trade was not diminished, but the declared value was less. The quantity exceeded the former year, notwithstanding the distress which then prevailed. With regard to cotton yarn, it appeared that in the year 1839 there was exported 105,600,000lbs., the declared value of which was 6,858,000*l.* In 1840, the quantity exported was 118,000,000lbs., and the declared value was 7,100,000*l.* making an average cost in the year 1839 of about 1*s.* 3½*d.* per lb, and in 1840, of 1*s.* 2¼*d.* The quantity had increased, but there was a deficiency of value. And yet, under all these circumstances, our trade had languished, our manufacturers had no employment, and the people were starving. He had shown, that this state of things had not arisen from a falling-off in the aggregate amount of our exports; and he would now state what, in his opinion, was the cause of this distress; and he would then leave the House to judge of the matter. Those cheap years which he had mentioned were 1834, and 1835; and taking the three years ending 1836, the average price of wheat in this country was 46*s.* 2*d.* Then, assuming the quantity of wheat consumed by each person according to the data furnished on the previous evening by the hon. Member for Salop (Mr. O. Gore) to be eight bushels per annum, and taking the population in round numbers for the United Kingdom at 28,000,000, giving each person one quarter of wheat upon an average of the three years, ending 1836, (though he agreed with the right hon. Baronet opposite, that taking the general consumption at eight bushels per head, was too high,) in the population of the United Kingdom, the Scotch and Irish consuming largely of oatmeal; this description of food, however, is equally affected by the law, and to avoid going into the particulars of each description of grain and quantity consumed, I have assumed for argument, that all the inhabitants consume wheat, and so make the calculation in round numbers. It would appear, that the cost to the inhabitants of this country would be, for wheaten flour, 62,000,000*l.* and odd. The three years ending in 1837, the average price of wheat was 44*s.* 6*d.*, and the cost to the people of this country was 60,000,000*l.* He stated these as years of prosperity in the manufacturing districts; but then came the years when, by reason of short crops, the pressure was greater. In 1838, the average was 56*s.* 2*d.*, and the cost to the country was 75,000,000*l.*, showing a difference in the year of 15,000,000*l.* Now, if the people were required to give 15,000,000*l.* more for wheat to keep them alive, that sum could not have been expended upon clothing. Then came the year 1839, when the average rose to 63*s.* 8*d.*, the total cost to the inhabitants of the kingdom being 85,950,000*l.*, showing a difference of 25,950,000*l.* as compared with 1837. In the year 1840, the average rose to 67*s.*, and the cost was 89,000,000*l.*, showing a difference of 29,000,000*l.* In 1841, the average rose to 67*s.* 1*d.*, the cost was 89,000,000*l*,, showing, that for the past four years, the inhabitants of the United Kingdom had paid about 100,000,000 more for the first necessary of life, than they had done upon the average price of the three years ending in 1837; which, in a great measure, accounts for the want of trade, by so large an amount being required to pay for food, as compared with the three or four years of prosperity, ending with 1837. The high price of food still continues, and with the working-classes upon short time and low wages, he would ask, how could the manufactures of the country be otherwise than depressed? All these evils were brought upon us by the effect of a sliding-scale of duties, which has in it a prohibitory rate, from periodically shutting out corn for years, and when the demand came, from no regular exchange of commodity having been established, the bank was drained of bullion by the effect upon the exchanges, and all the commerce of the country unconnected with corn, deranged and embarrassed. He could not hope, that the right hon. Baronet would change his plan, but he thought, when the right hon. Gentleman next considered the question, he would substitute a fixed duty, if the agricultural interest required it. It would be far better that this should be done, than that the sliding-scale should continue.

Mr. *Christmas* said, that an hon. Member having, in the course of the debate, alluded to the silence of the Irish Members (a fault not generally attributable to them), he thought, that circumstance and the course which the debate had taken, called upon him to address the House, and he should, therefore, do so, rather from necessity than choice, and chiefly with reference to that country. Although hon. Members who advocated this question on the opposite side, were very liberal of such phrases as "monopoly" and "taxation on the people," he could not conceive, that the House of Commons, consisting, as it did, of practical men, returned by the constituency of the kingdom to legislate impartially for the kingdom, could legislate on this subject, otherwise than with reference to the whole community. If that observation applied to this country, it applied with still greater force to Ireland, in which nearly the whole population was agricultural, and which would have nothing to fall back upon, if deprived of the means of support by agricultural labour, since the House could not hold out to them the promise of extended commerce, which was held out to the population of this country. He thought, that when hon. Gentlemen came forward and appealed to the agricultural community, to give up these laws, they ought to be able to satisfy them fully what the effect would be, but on this point, there appeared to be great discrepancy of opinion. Some said, the landed interest would not suffer at all, but others took a different view of the subject. If the effect should be to throw out of cultivation a considerable quantity of land, the most serious consequences would result to Ireland, and to this country also, from the vast number of agricultural labourers, that would be thrown out of employment. Let hon. Gentlemen consider what would be the effect, if, in consequence of the diminution of the price of their produce, proprietors were obliged to take large tracts into their hands, and thus deprive numbers of the agricultural population of employment. Let hon. Members remember, that the price was lower in Ireland than in this country, and let them remember, also, that land was not so much improved there, as it was here, and consequently, that any reduction must be attended with the most serious consequences. The hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets had made some observations on which he wished to say a few words. The hon. Member had said, that the import of wheat from Ireland, of late years, had been considerably reduced, and his argument was, that they could no longer obtain supplies from Ireland. It was true, that for some few years past, there had been some reduction, but the import of wheat and all kinds of corn from Ireland had increased greatly within the present century, and he found, that the increase of imports had been simultaneous with the operation of the present Corn-laws. He found, that in 1833, the quantity imported was 840,211 quarters; in 1834, 779,505 quarters; in 1835, 661,766 quarters; in 1836, 598,756 quarters; in 1837, 534,665 quarters; in 1838, 542,583 quarters. Then came the three last years, during which there had been a considerable reduction; the imports in 1839, being 258,331 quarters; in 1840, 174,439; and in 1841, 218,718 quarters. He found, also, that taking the total average up from the year 1833 to the year 1838, the amount of imports was 3,991,297 quarters, and that in the six years preceding that period, it was 3,055,564 quarters, showing a reduction of about 500,000 quarters. The hon. Member had said, that this was a proof of the increased prosperity of Ireland. Now, he would grant, that an increase in population might cause some increase in consumption; but, as far as his knowledge extended, there had been no considerable improvement in the condition of the people. He thought, that the decrease in exportation was partly attributable to the linen trade, which, of late years, had sprung up in Ireland; but he did not admit, that the trade in wheat with Ireland, would hereafter necessarily fail. He also thought, that it was partly attributable to other causes, such as the variety in the seasons. The autumn of 1839 was, in Ireland, very wet, which prevented the farmer from sowing any great quantity of wheat, and, accordingly, the smallest importation, namely, 174,439 quarters, took place in 1840; and, again, only 218,718 quarters in 1841, that having, also, been a bad season. Now, it was his opinion, that the export of wheat from Ireland might be considerably increased, under a better system of agriculture, but he could not draw the inference, that the three last years might be taken as presenting a fair average, though he would admit, at the same time, that the climate of Ireland might not be so favourable to the cultivation of wheat as that of England, just as the climate of England, on account of its great humidity, was not so favourable as the climate of the Continent. But there was another article of export which he had not adverted to, which, although generally but a secondary one, was, in Ireland, of primary importance—namely, the article of oats. He found, by the returns, that great increase had taken place in the exportation of oats, from the year 1825, or thereabouts; and that in the last three years, although the seasons had been bad, the exports of this article had scarcely fallen off. The exports in 1839 were 1,904,903 quarters; in 1840, 2,037,835 quarters; in 1841, 2,539,380 quarters; while last year was inferior in this respect only to one year in the present century. Therefore the cultivation of oats was an object of primary importance to Ireland. Now, an impression prevailed amongst the Irish Members that the Government proposition was not sufficient protection; and although he should not press this opinion to a division, yet considering the position of Ireland, if, on a fuller consideration of the question, he should think fit to vote for a higher duty, he should feel himself at liberty to do so. With reference to flour, the House was aware that a trade in this article had sprung up of late years, and that its importation into Ireland was prohibited, but now it was to be admitted. But, if foreign flour was permitted to displace Irish flour, great numbers would be thrown out of employment; and he would, therefore, call on hon. Members to pause before they consented to such a measure. He felt little inclination to enter upon the general question, and if he did, it would be presumptuous and superfluous in him to do so, after the able speeches they had heard upon the subject. He thought that hon. Gentlemen must have been led away by party feelings, when they said that the new measure was no better than the old. He found, by reference to the scales of duties, that at the price of 60*s*., the proposed duty was 12s., while the present duty was not less than 26*s*. 8*d*. Did hon. Gentlemen say that was no advantage? He confessed he thought it a great advantage. The noble Lord, the Member for London, had objected to all sliding scales, as having all of them prohibitory duties. But he thought, that the noble Lord's own fixed duty of 8*s*. was not less a prohibitory duty. He thought the House had been debating this question somewhat illogically, and that the amendment of the noble Lord should have given place to the resolution of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Villiers). With reference to the American trade, which was most important, it appeared to him to possess many elements of uncertainty. The speech of the hon. Member for Knaresborough appeared to have excited considerable sensation, but if hon. Gentlemen opposite complained that they had been attacked, they should remember, that both in that House and out of it, very severe charges had been previously made against the landowners, and that he who struck the first blow was most in fault. He would not follow either party in these charges, but would rather inquire whether those improvements in manufactures of which they had heard so much, had been followed by any improvement in the condition of the people. He remembered, that previous to the reform of Parliament, considerable discussion had taken place as to the condition of those employed in factories. The hon. Member, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, was one of the first agitators in that field; but the House was now in a condition in which it must either force unnaturally the amount of labour, or inflict injury upon the manufacturing interest. No doubt it was their duty to employ as much as possible the existing population. He was sorry to find the hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets take so desponding a view of the state of the commerce of the country. But, whatever the present depression might be, he thought that if there had been no Corn-laws, that depression must have followed in the natural course of things, since, notwithstanding the hon. Member's views as to its capacity for indefinite extension, in all communities, as well as in natural bodies, there might be found a principle of decay. But whether this were the case or not, he was prepared to give his support to the measure of the Government, believing it to be a practicable measure, holding the balance evenly between the two parties. He believed, that without causing any great declension in agriculture, it would give a great stimulus to manufactures. He bound himself to no finality in legislation, not even in constitutional matters; but he took this to be a practical measure, and one suited to the present day, though it might or might not be proper hereafter to limit still more the scale of duties. They might be wrong on his side of the House, but believing that on the whole, it would tend to promote manufactures without injuring agriculture, he should give his assent to the measure that had been brought forward by the Government.

Mr. *Roebuck* said, that he should not have solicited the indulgence of the House, but that he felt that if he gave a silent vote upon this question he might render himself and those who entertained similar views to his own liable to some misapprehension. He should, therefore, state his views as shortly as he could, and he was driven to do so by certain observations that had fallen last night from the right hon. Baronet opposite (Sir J. Graham), who said that the condition in which those on that side of the House were placed, arose from too strict adherence to technical forms, and that sometimes the rules of that House might lead to conduct opposed to the rules of common sense. He should have quite agreed with the right hon. Baronet if he had thought the right hon. Baronet's views of the rules of the House had been correct, and that they should have commenced discussing whether there should be any duty at all before they discussed in what mode the duty should be levied. He quite agreed that they were then discussing a question that ought to have been left for secondary consideration, but he believed that their reason for doing so arose partly from a misconception that had gone abroad as to the rules of the House, and partly from a misconception of what had fallen from the Chair; for he thought that he was quite justified in saying that it was competent to any hon. Member to have proposed on an abstract proposition a resolution against imposing any duty whatsoever. And even now he would go so far as to say, that to the amendment of the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) another amendment might be proposed, and a division be previously taken on it—on an amendment of an amendment;—that he took to be the rule which he desired should have been followed, for by that means those who were of opinion that there should be no duty on the importation of foreign corn would have been relieved from a difficulty which he acknowledged they now experienced. It might be said that the question was so put now that it would be inconsistency on their parts to vote for it, but he thought that if his explanation were properly received, there could be no danger of misapprehension on the subject. If the House should decide upon voting on the question as it at present stood, he was willing to defer his individual judgment to their better judgments, leaving the public to determine whether he had been prudent or imprudent in so doing. He would not ask any one to believe that he was not going to discuss the sliding scale. He opposed the plan, not because it was a sliding scale; that which alone he was induced to think a matter of great importance was, not the particular mode of levying the tax but the tax itself. What was the point of dispute between himself and the right hon. Baronet? It was this, that he believed the plan brought forward by him to be as unwise as it was impolitic, and that for reasons which he would by and by expose. The plan was unwise for the purposes which the right hon. Baronet professed to have in view, and it was equally inapplicable as a measure for the benefit of the country. When he said that, he did not mean to impute to the right hon. Gentleman any views but the most kindly and beneficent. Let him be permitted to divest the question before the House of all the extraneous matter which had been mixed up with it, previous to entering upon its consideration and examination. Let him in the first place state that he was not going to make it a religious question, nor was he going to put it upon the footing which had been adopted by some persons, namely, of stigmatising the Corn-laws as a flagrant sin. What he would endeavour to do would be to set the question fairly before the House; to urge those arguments against its policy, which in his opinion were most applicable and cogent, and to lay aside altogether the vulgar prejudices which had been mixed up with the Corn-law question. It had been made the vehicle of many arguments and considerations which were wholly foreign to the subject, and amongst others was the imputation of sin, which he was ready to admit was quite as applicable to those of his own side of the House as to any other party, and which would hereafter be used with effect against themselves, and they would suffer from that spirit of fanaticism which they had invoked. The law imposing a duty, either fixed or shifting in amount, upon foreign wheat might be an unwise law, it might be an impolitic law, but in no sense could it be termed a sinful law; and it was not a fair mode of argument to attack the Corn-laws upon the ground of their being sinful. Nor would he ever endeavour to overcome or to vanquish his opponents by having recourse to so unworthy a mode of proceeding. He should therefore first endeavour to sift to their origin the causes of the distress which it was now with one universal consent admitted did actually exist, throughout the principal branches of manufactures in England and Scotland; and in doing this he must be permitted to express his sense of the valour—for he could apply no other term—and exemplary patience—a valour and patience which all were ready to applaud—with which the people had borne their sufferings. All who knew the amount of the privations which the working classes had endured for many, many months past, were ready to testify to the heroic resolution with which they had been endured, and honoured the endurance whilst they sympathised in the distresses of the people. Before he addressed himself to the question itself, he would venture to offer a few remarks upon the state of distress that existed in the country. That distress had been admitted by the right hon. Baronet, and by every body on the other side of the House. One class had been loud, unanimous, and vehement in their descriptions of that distress, and all parties were bound to agree and bear testimony to the valour, for he could apply no other term, with which the people of the country had borne the burden of their distress. But all parties were not agreed as to the cause of that distress. At the outset of his remarks he wished to disclaim all intention of imputing the cause of the distress to any party in the state now present. He believed that the distress had arisen from circumstances over which they had had no control—from circumstances which, perhaps, were unavoidable. At the same time, however, he considered that the cause was a worthy subject for consideration; he thought they should cast their eyes a few years back, and learn what was at the bottom of this distress. He thought it would be found to have originated and been created by the views, not of themselves, but of those who had preceded them. Years ago a factitious system was created to make head against the overbearing power of France. The manufacturing power arose. England became an isolated country—she stood alone, insulated as regarded the rest of the world, quite as much as regarded her political as her geographical position. As time rolled on, this new and extraordinary system became subject to fresh trials and novel combinations, which had at last brought about the state of things under which the present generation existed. But it should be remembered by the Gentlemen opposite, who represented the landed interest, that the energy that had in those days been called forth was called forth by themselves. Those Gentlemen had made the people a manufacturing people, and they could not now turn round and ask the question whether they were called upon to maintain the manufacturing system—a system that had been brought into existence by those who had governed the country. Those who now ruled were not perhaps responsible for the distress, but they were for the mode in which they dealt with it. The manufacturing class had a claim upon the Gentlemen who represented the landed interest, and it did not rest with the latter now to turn round and say we will not foster your manufactures. That should have been said before, when the enemy was at their doors. The landed Gentlemen were not in that House to say, "Can we now maintain the manufacturing system?" They must maintain it. It would not do now to ask, "Can we foster this system?" They must foster it. They must keep it up, not only as a matter of right, but as a matter of necessity. He disclaimed all intention of imputing to the right hon. Baronet responsibility for the cause of the distress; but he would beg him, and the House, and the country, to consider the peculiar position in which the right hon. Gentleman stood, and the peculiar responsibility he assumed when he began to deal with this question. Some few months ago this difficulty was seen coming on—all men of practical sagacity foresaw it. That was the time when the right hon. Baronet and his party chose to make a grand effort—to move all the engines they were able to command—for the purpose of seating themselves where they now were, and violently to seize the reins of government. He was merely describing the fact; he did not blame them. He was merely stating that it was at that peculiar juncture of affairs, when every man of common sagacity must have seen what was impending, the present Government chose to assume office. There was, therefore, a peculiar responsibility upon them when they were about to deal with the distress of the country, seeing that upon their shoulders the blame, if blame there were, of a failure must inevitably rest. At the time the former Government left office, they had proposed, late he would admit, very late, a plan for relieving the distress of the people. It was a proceeding that might be likened, not inaptly, were he ill-naturedly disposed to the baptism of Constantine, which was put off as long as possible, and adopted at the last moment to expiate a life of error and rapacity. That measure, however, good or bad, the late government were not permitted to carry; the right hon. Baronet assumed the reins of power, and upon him devolved the business and the responsibility. The right hon. Gentleman last year appeared before the house, and said, he thought justly,

> "Don't press me now. I must take all the evidence that can be gotten. I am new in my seat. I have not had time to consider this great question. Give me time, and you shall see what I will propose."

Time went on. The Session of Parliament commenced. All must remember the first night of the session, when the right hon. Gentleman, and with much emphasis, and a solemn deportment, as if almost weighed down by the weight of the burden upon his mind, solemnly said, that as early as possible, as soon as the forms of the House would allow, he would come down and touch this awful question. All hon. Members were alive to the importance of the occasion. Gentlemen on both sides wondered what the perspicacity of the right hon. Gentleman would bring forward for the relief of the distress of which he had acknowledged the existence. There could be none in that House who did not remember the scene which took place on the night the right hon. Gentleman was to announce his plan. The nation was on tip-toe and the public expectation was so much roused, that hon. Gentlemen around him were overwhelmed, as they would recollect, with applications to fill the seats in the gallery. The House was crowded at an early hour. He well remembered the right hon. Baronet walking up the House, every eye turned upon him. Great was the marvel at what was forthcoming—as to how the right hon. Gentleman had managed to keep his secret—"*Omne ignotum pro magnifico.*" All expected that some great plan had been devised, characterised by profound forethought and prudence, and which was to be as effective as the most consummate statesmanship could accomplish. During two long hours the right hon. Baronet was developing his plan: every now and then Gentlemen seized paper and pens, in order to catch the ideas, for which, however, they vainly looked. The right hon. Baronet continued to talk "about it, and about it, and about it," and at length—such a scene as it was he should never forget—all the marvellous secresy and all the wonderful sagacity and perspicuity of the right hon. Baronet had ended in the smoke of the sliding scale. And what was the marvellous plan which the right hon. Baronet had at such apparently infinite pains conceived for the amelioration of the sliding scale, but a mere alteration, amounting to a slight modification in the present law. The right hon. Baronet said that was the best plan that in his opinion could be devised for all parties; but if he were of that opinion why did he not say so at first, and in half an hour settle the matter, instead of spreading his plan in a superficial speech over the space of two hours. The right hon. Baronet had complained of the jumping scale, but all that he had to object to on that ground, and all he had to propose in the way of amendment upon the present Corn-laws, might have been easily said in half an hour. That was what he objected to. What the right hon. Baronet ought to have done was to have boldly and concisely said, "the present is the best scheme that can in my opinion be devised, and I adopt it as the basis of my Corn-law." The right hon. Baronet had now made the child his own, and he would leave the country to admire the bantling. Had the right hon. Baronet looked at the question in an extended and statesmanlike manner, he might have opened such a field for action as would effectually have alleviated the distresses of the people. He had been in hope that an arrangement would have been proposed which would have produced steadiness of price, and the advantage of a low price, which would have extended the markets of the country, and thus created a larger demand for the labour of those who were starving, not from idleness, but from want of work. The right hon. Gentleman, the Vice-President of the Board of Trade, had compared the prices in other countries having no Corn-law with the prices in this. But the right hon. Gentleman had fallen into a fallacy. The right hon. Gentleman had compared the advantages of a country that was self-supporting with those of a country that was not self-supporting, and was extending her markets all over the world. This country combined the disadvantages of a self-supporting system with a supplying system. With respect to the alleged independence of this country of foreign supply, it was chimerical, and incapable of being followed out. It was not in existence—it could not be brought into existence. England had more mouths than the produce of her soil could feed; she could not grow corn enough, and she was obliged to have recourse to her manufactures to purchase it. They had better get rid of the notion of this being a self-supplying country, and they would gain this great advantage instead of independence; they would bind mankind to them by the only bonds of amity, the bonds of self-interest. He would ask if this country would not have been at war with North America ere this, had it not been for our commercial system? Spread that net all over the world. Go to Spanish America, to Odessa, to every wheat-exporting country, and give them the opportunity of entering into permanent and profitable bonds for the exchange of produce against manufactures, and so vast a source of mutual interest would spring up as for ever to put an end to the bloody system of war. If the people of England went as merchants—if they went as Christians, and offered to enter into such relations as he had alluded to with foreign countries, philosophy warranted him in drawing the deduction which he had done. What was it broke the alliance between Alexander and Napoleon? Was it the force of British arms? No, it was the power of her manufactures, and who, therefore, would say that she would become dependent upon others by stretching the mighty arms of her commerce from pole to pole. But let him ask if the right hon. Baronet had stated it to be his expectation that his newly arranged sliding scale would stop the fluctuations in the price of corn, or bring into operation a certain and regular trade in that article? On the contrary, all that the right hon. Baronet appeared to have considered was how best to conciliate those friends who sat behind him. He had told the country that they were not to have a free and extended commerce with the whole world, and to give in return for corn their manufactures. He had told them the very reverse of all this, for he had declared that the prohibition to import foreign corn would be continued, and that the fluctuations in price would still continue. Then came the question as to the lowering of the price of food; and here he must candidly avow that he had never entertained any expectation that the price of food would be lowered by the abolition of the Corn-laws. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Kent had said that protection was necessary in order to enable the landowners to maintain their present station in society. By that, he presumed, the right hon. Baronet meant it was necessary for the good of the country that there should be maintained a class of resident gentry, who having nothing to do, and being able to command perfect leisure, were, therefore, at liberty to cultivate their intellect for the good of society at large. That was probably what the right hon. Gentleman meant, but he had not shown that all those same advantages of a resident gentry could not be obtained without the expense of protection. He could not however, believe this. He could not believe that the landed proprietors would be less wise, less enlightened, less patriotic, less the ornaments, the Corinthian capitals of society, less country gentlemen, in short, if the nation were to refuse to continue to give them 20*s*. a quarter additional upon their wheat. Were all the virtues of patriotism centred in the ownership of a spring carriage? Was there no wisdom but such as was to be obtained by a tariff. He believed the resident gentry were what they were said to be—a great benefit to society; but he believed they would be just as beneficial without a protecting duty of 20*s*.

To be wise and beneficial did not imperatively require that wealth should be concentrated in few hands and in large masses. On the contrary, if it were somewhat more widely spread, in portions sufficient for modest wants and comforts, it would be far more likely to engender feelings and habits beneficial to society at large. Beware, said the friends and advocates of the landed interest, how you touch the Corn-laws, or remove the present protection given to the home growers of corn. They are, say they, your best customers. True, they are considerable customers; but to make them good customers by our present system of protection, the manufacturing public pay back with one hand the profit they obtain with the other from the agriculturists for their manufactured articles. Would it not be, perhaps, the best way, certainly it would be the shorter, to give the agriculturists so much money at once. The hon. Gentleman opposite the Member for Shropshire and the hon. Member for Bolton, disagreed as to the sum given to the agriculturists by this plan of protective duties, the latter contending that the bonus given was above 50,000,000*l.* sterling, the former that it did not exceed 5,000,000*l.* Whatever its amount might be, which course was to be proposed? To lose their custom in future, if that could be conceived possible, in consequence of refusing to give this bonus of 5,000,000*l.* or 50,000,000*l.*, and to seek by the extension of our trade, which he thought very practicable, with foreign countries, an equivalent, or more than equivalent profit from the good so exported; or to continue to contribute in this very objectionable and injurious way to our interests and the manufacturing interests the amount of bonus given to the agriculturists by this state of the law? To adopt the latter course would be highly impolitic, and, in his mind, buying a Corinthian column too dearly. To this part of his argument he would invite sincerely an answer from any Gentleman who should deem anything he said worthy of notice. Let it too be understood that he repudiated all idea of protection in this or in any other branch of our national industry. Protection! what does it imply? It means that we, forming the great body of society, are to be compelled to labour intensely; to sustain privation on privation; occasionally to starve; and to endure the harrowing and appalling condition described in the numerous petitions of the people presented to the House, in order that at this fearful expense to society at large the agriculturists and the landed interest shall enjoy a monopoly of the supply of food for this great country, rapidly increasing as it is, year by year, in the amount of its population. Upon those who would continue that monopoly must rest all the odium of the system, and the onus to prove that they were worthy of the price which was paid for it. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to admit that as much odium was attached to a fixed duty as to the sliding scale, and that all the objections made against the sliding scale were equally applicable to a fixed duty. Certainly it would appear that they who came forward with a proposition for a fixed duty were not in a position to enable them to throw off their shoulders the odium incident to the maintenance of a peculiarly odious monopoly. The right hon Gentleman had stated that the landed interest sustained peculiar burdens, and therefore they ought to be protected. The answer to that was, first, that he denied the assertion. They had always shrunk from bearing their proper share of the public burdens. Let them prove that they sustained more than their share, and the moment that they did so it would be far more economical to come to the determination to remove them by direct than by indirect measures. [*Hear, hear.*] He was happy to hear hon. Gentlemen on the Ministerial side of the House cheering, and he hoped the time would soon come when they would not only cheer, but vote in support of that sentiment, for then their cheers would be far more honest, and he would be ready to think that they really did believe themselves to be unfairly dealt with. But he must again call upon them to prove their grievance. He wanted some hon. Gentleman to get up and state their grievance. Would one tell him that they paid the Poor-rate? So did he. Would another say that they paid the county-rate? So did he. The other classes of the community paid the same taxes as the agriculturists, and he believed that the quota of the manufacturers was as large as that of the agriculturists, if not larger. But they who said that they had certain peculiar burdens to sustain, had no right to make that an argument for the continuance of this monopoly. If they were aggrieved, they ought, like other classes of the community, to lay their petitions before that House, and, exposing their grievances, ask the House to find a remedy for them. An hon. Member (the Member for Staffordshire) had said, that he had never given a vote upon the Corn-law question which had not been given for his personal and private interest. [An hon. *Member*, "*no, no.*"] In order that there should be no mistake on this head, the hon. Member had repeated the assertion and then followed the old statement that in so voting he had voted for the benefit of the people. In these stale generalities all within these walls were certain to agree. They were all virtuous; nobody doubted that. But he was not like the hon. Gentleman; he had no Roman virtues, at least, he had not the Roman virtues of the hon. Gentleman. He disapproved of the doctrine that they would best consult the interests of the country by consulting their own private interests. If an hon. Gentleman gave his vote in furtherance of the interests of his country, and it served his own interest at the same time, so much the better; but he should not vote to suit his own purpose with a vague hope that it might be beneficial to the country. As the representatives of the people, they ought not to discard principle and be guided by such loose political morality as that which would make the public good subservient to private interest. He, therefore, entreated hon. Gentlemen to give a fair consideration to this question, and to reflect that there was at that moment that peculiar acumen of consideration in the public mind, which would lead the people to judge whether they were possessed of that Roman virtue which belonged to the hon. Member for Stafford. If they continued to consider themselves only, to pay a paramount regard to their own interests, to seek to maintain their own incomes by keeping up the price of corn,—if they continued to weigh heavily upon the people, and look upon their distresses with that calm philosophy which every right-thinking man must regard as stoicism, there would come a time of reckoning that would not redound to their advantage; that time he believed to be about to arrive, for in his heart he did think that at the present moment the working classes of this country were looking upon the great experiment which was going on with great and intense anxiety. It had been said, the working classeshad taken no part, or at least a small one, in the agitation. He believed that was true; but let not hon. Members lay that flattering unction to their souls on that account, that all was secure and safe. The working classes were looking on, and they said, "This is a great experiment going on as regards two interests—the landed interest and what is called the mercantile interest." First, they would inquire whether the landed interest were willing to do that for the people which the great bulk of the people thought ought to be done for them —whether they would voluntarily yield to the distresses of the people, and to the demands which those distresses justified them in making? That was what they would look to from the landed interest. Then they would look to the mercantile interest and say, "They also are represented in Parliament: we will see whether they have, by their own unaided efforts, power so to act, and to coerce the landed gentry, as to compel them, if not willing, to do justice to the people." If it should turn out that this experiment failed, then would the people come to two conclusions— first, that the landed gentry were unwilling to do them justice; and, secondly, that the House of Commons was unable to compel them to do them justice. If ever the time arrived at which the people came to the latter of these two conclusions, then would the great body of the labouring and industrious classes look for the co-operation of the mercantile interests in a system of agitation different from any that had yet existed in this country. Depend upon it, that not looking at the measure now proposed simply as a mercantile question —not regarding it merely as an experiment of fiscal regulation—but viewing it as the great project of a great statesman, the time would come when the people would point the finger at that statesman and say, "As he lagged behind his age before, so does he lag behind it now. Wavering and temporizing in his policy, he lost the opportunity of conferring a practical benefit upon his countrymen, although it was plain to every man of ordinary sense, that that benefit could not long be withheld. Lacking courage to quicken his pace, so as to be equal with the spirit of the times in which he lived, henceforward he may strive, but strive in vain, to reach the onward march upon which his countrymen are bent. His opportunities as a statesman were great—he failed to employ them. His convictions were often not unjust—he feared to act upon them. His race is run." The right hon. Baronet's position was not an enviable one. Should this project fail, as fail it must, on him and on his head would be concentrated the onus and odium of the failure. He would have shown to his country either that he had not sagacity to see and understand the distress of the people, and the mode of relieving it, or that seeing that distress, and well knowing the means of relief, he had not the courage to propose the proper remedy.

Lord *Ashley* here rose and said, it was not his intention to enter at all into the discussion of the question before the House; but he hoped the House would forgive him for interposing for a moment upon a matter relating to himself. At five o'clock that day he was informed that the hon. Member for Sheffield, in a speech which he delivered on the previous evening, made an allusion somewhat in the nature of an attack upon him. Not being in the House at the time when the hon. Member spoke, he had not the benefit of hearing what was said; but as soon as the information was conveyed to him, he resorted to the only channel through which he could obtain an accurate statement of the speech of the hon. Member. (The noble Lord produced a copy of a newspaper, and was about to quote the speech of Mr. Ward, but the noble Lord was called to order by the Speaker.) He would endeavour to state the nature of the argument, if he could not cite the precise words of the hon. Member, and that for the purpose of giving to them the flattest contradiction. He understood that the hon. Member had said, that the object of the hon. Member for Knaresborough was to revive discussions which ought to be forgotten, and to engender angry passions which ought to be allayed, to set masters against men, and to produce nothing but anarchy and confusion. "Had that," continued the hon. Member, "been the sentiment of a single speaker, he should have taken no notice of it; but it was most vociferously cheered by a noble Lord, who had refused office on account of his sincere, but, as he thought, foolish devotion to a set of principles and wild theories which would take us back to savage life, if they were acted on." The hon. Member then proceeded to say, that he (Lord Ashley) supported the hon. Member for Knaresborough in his attempts to excite the bad passions of the people, and that the principles he maintained would restore the country to its pristine and savage state. Now, (said the noble Lord), I will ask, does the hon. Gentleman know whether I cheered at all? Does he know whether I heard the speech of the hon. Member for Knaresborough? Does he know whether I was present in the House? Allow me to say, that before a charge of this nature was made, it would have been but courteous, I think, to give me some notice of it; but I not only did not hear the statements I am said to have cheered, but I did not hear the speech containing the charges made against me. I was not even in the neighbourhood of the House when the speech of the hon. Member for Knaresborough was delivered; and I will leave the House to judge which of the two, the hon. Member, or myself, has done most to bring about the manners and habits of the ages of barbarism.

Mr. *Ward:* I hope the House will excuse me if I take the earliest opportunity of expressing to the noble Lord my deep and unfeigned regret for the mistake into which I was most unintentionally betrayed. I could not possibly have an intention to misrepresent a fact. If I had not most implicitly believed that the noble Lord was the person who cheered the hon. Member for Knaresborough. ["*Oh, oh*"]. Surely you cannot imagine that any man in his senses would intentionally bring a charge against a Member of the House sitting opposite to him which was capable of being contradicted in terms so decisive as those just used by the noble Lord. I believed that the noble Lord had expressed his assent in the way in which assent is usually expressed in this House to the sentiments of the hon. Member for Knaresborough—believing that I conceived that I had a right to allude to what I considered to be a marked expression of his opinion upon the subject under discussion. It seems that I did him wrong. I can now only express my deep regret for having misrepresented him, and a hope that he will pardon me for having introduced his name into the discussion.

Lord *Ashley:* I am very much obliged to the hon. Member for the manner in which he admits his error. I am perfectly satisfied.

Viscount *Sandon,* though unwilling to

protract the debate, could not avoid calling the attention of the House to the manner in which the language of the merchants of Liverpool engaged in the American trade, as contained in the petition he had presented, had been commented upon by the right hon. Member for Taunton. Now, although he was not prepared to deny, that those merchants preferred a fixed duty to a sliding-scale, still the right hon. Gentleman had no right to assume, that which was not the fact, viz., that in the opinion of the petitioners, the new sliding-scale as proposed by Ministers was not a great improvement upon the sliding-scale as it at present existed, and that they did not believe, that great benefit would result from it to commerce and manufactures. If the House would allow him, he would read an extract from a letter he had received from one of those merchants, in which he said:—

> "You are aware, that my own judgment inclines to a fixed duty, but knowing, that the feeling of the Government, is in favour of a sliding-scale, I am disposed to look on the proposition, as brought forward, as a very great improvement, when I consider the very large amount of the present undue protection, while it affords an ample guarantee, against our being dependent upon foreign countries, for too large a proportion of our supplies."

The danger of being dependent upon foreign nations for the supply of food was to be avoided by every country. America was fully alive to this. The late President of the United States, in his message to the Congress, three years ago, had adverted to the evils likely to result from a country placing itself at the mercy of others for its supplies of food, leaving it in the power of those foreign nations to concede or to refuse them. He had already referred to a communication, showing that in the eyes of mercantile men the proposition of the Government was likely to be attended with most important advantages to the mercantile interest. He had also had a communication with a gentleman connected with the mill interest, who had informed him, that the Government measure would have the effect of affording facilities for the trade in foreign flour, which did not at present exist; for as flour was a perishable article, all persons were anxious to avoid speculating for the home-market, under the existing system, owing to its uncertainty; but now there would be a regular trade going on, and, of course, a great advantage to those engaged in it. These were the opinions of practical men, who looked upon the question of the Corn-laws as a matter of business. They saw in the Ministerial measure a great improvement upon the present law. He thought these opinions formed a sufficient answer to the assertion put forward by the other side, that the measure of the Government would leave the trade in corn precisely in the same position in which it now was. He must beg to warn the House against those dreams of perfect prosperity which were held out to the House by Gentlemen opposite, as the result, if they would but accept their nostrums of a perfect free-trade or a fixed duty. Mr. Greg, of Manchester, in his pamphlets on on the Corn-laws, the object of which was to show the advantages of a free-trade in corn, had, after referring to the way in which British manufactures were now driven out of every neutral market by our continental rivals, and the importance of our endeavouring to regain our position, admitted, that to effect that object, a reduction in the wages of labour was necessary; for he said, that foreign nations had a decided advantage over us in this respect, and that an increased trade in provisions would be beneficial in reducing that advantage, though, he added, he doubted if it could be entirely removed. But were the manufacturers alone to be considered? Now, they had been told, that the effect of the Corn-laws had been to bring into cultivation a very large amount of land in this country, which would not else have been cultivated, and which now employed a large proportion of our population. If those laws were repealed, and all protection to British agriculture were withdrawn, that land would be thrown out of cultivation, and what then would become of all those who were now engaged in tilling the soil? Hundreds of thousands, nay, millions of persons would thus be thrown on the poor-rates, or sent into the manufacturing towns, to lower the price of wages there. Therefore, he held, that it was the interest of all classes, not that of a few landed proprietors only, to give such a protection to agriculture as should prevent this calamity. It was alike important to all parties to consider this question in all its bearings. If they thought it necessary to reduce the present amount of protection, it was due from them, as wise statesmen, to make that reduction gradually, and to see the effect of such an alteration as that proposed by his right hon. Friend, at the head of the Government, before they decided upon making so sweeping a change, as that proposed by the noble Lord, the Member for London. He was of opinion, that if the changes in the present Corn-laws were brought about with consideration, they might confer important advantages on our commercial interest, give the people food at a cheaper rate, and still preserve a due amount of protection to agriculture. That important interest might, he believed, be preserved, without infringing upon any other. He thought, that by a judicious compromise, like that now proposed by the Government, our commerce and manufactures might be promoted and extended, while that protection which the landed interest had a right to look for, would be maintained. He would not longer detain the House. He had risen chiefly to state that commercial men, who were uninfluenced by mere party considerations, were, to a great extent, satisfied with the Government measure, and accepted it as a great boon, and as a large measure, conceived in most liberal spirit.

Lord *Worsley* said, that he was anxious to explain to the House the reasons why he could not give his consent to the motion which had emanated from his noble Friend the Member for the City of London, and also why, as the representative of a large and influential constituency, he could not conscientiously extend his support to the proposition which had, a few evenings back, been submitted to the House by the right hon. Baronet at the head of her Majesty's Government. He was of opinion that the question substantially before the House, and one which hon. Members ought principally to consider, was the resolution of the noble Lord. He could not vote for that resolution, because it was not his belief that the sliding scale was productive of the evils which had been said to result from its operation. Much of the distress which prevailed throughout the country had been attributed to the influence of the present Corn-laws. From that opinion he disagreed. He did not consider that they stood in the relation of cause and effect. The great distress which unhappily existed in the country could not legitimately be traced to the Corn-laws. Let the hon. Members who entertained an opposite opinion look at the past condition of the country. During the existence of the present Corn-laws, the manufacturing interest of this country had accumulated great wealth. This had taken place under the operation of laws similar to those now in existence. In no other part of the world had the manufacturing body prospered to so great an extent as they had in this country. They had exhibited a spirit of almost unexampled speculation. Large sums of money had been embarked in the establishment of railroad communications, and in other important and useful enterprises, and he, therefore, was justified in asserting, that under the present system of Corn-laws, the country had been in a prosperous state of advancement. With regard to the proposition of a fixed duty, he had no hesitation in stating that he objected to it. If it was agreed to have a fixed duty on corn, then he would ask for a low instead of a high one, because there would exist a better probability of sustaining a low duty; but if a high duty was proposed and adopted, then in times of scarcity it would be impossible to maintain it. Under a low fixed duty he thought that the agriculturists and the farmers would not be able to cultivate a sufficient quantity of corn for home consumption; he had the same objection to the measure of the right hon. Baronet. Indeed, he was at a loss to conceive why, at this moment, such a scheme should have been submitted for the consideration of Parliament. He perfectly recollected that during the last Session, when the hon. Members opposite were seated on that side of the House, many petitions were presented by them, praying for no alteration in the Corn-laws, and it was his belief that many of those hon. Gentlemen who now gave to the Government measure their unqualified support, pledged themselves in the presence of their constituents, not to support any measure which would have the tendency to diminish that protection which the agriculturists now enjoyed. They certainly, if they did not positively pledge themselves to resist any alteration in the Corn-laws, left an impression on the minds of the constituent body, when they addressed them from the hustings that such were their intentions. He would, on this point, refer the House to the Speech of the hon. Member for Rutland, who stated, when addressing his constituents, that the Corn-laws could not be altered for the better. The Member for Northamptonshire stated, that he was prepared to stand by the present law. The Member for East Norfolk declared, that in the present scale of duties the national safety consisted. The Member for East Suffolk declared it to be his intention to oppose any alteration of the present system, and his colleague supported him in that resolution. It was his hope that all the hon. Members who held these opinions when before their constituents would come forward and act up to their professions, and oppose the measure of her Majesty's Government. He was very much mistaken if those hon. Members had not led their constituents into the belief that it was their intention to offer a resolute opposition to any serious alteration in the Corn-laws. He must also observe with reference to his own case that he had given his opposition to the late Government when they proposed to alter the Corn-laws by substituting a fixed duty for the present scale. During his late election, many Gentlemen had been induced to oppose him, having been persuaded that he would vote against the Government of the right hon. Baronet. His constituents were under the impression that the right hon. Gentleman did not intend to alter the Corn-laws. He had stated to his constituents that it was his opinion that the right hon. Baronet would not, in any measure which he proposed, extend to the agriculturists the same protection which they enjoyed under the present law. He had been told frequently that he had misrepresented the sentiments of the right hon. Baronet, and in consequence of that feeling, an opposition was offered to his re-election; but he was proud to say, that he stood in that House by the suffrages of 5,401 electors, who voted for him in order that he might exert the utmost of his abilities to maintain the present law. The right hon. Baronet, when he stated to the House the nature of the measure which her Majesty's Government had thought it right to propose, stated various reasons which had induced them to bring it forward. He stated also that he did not think the Corn-law was the cause of the present manufacturing distress, in that opinion he agreed; he thought there were other causes which might account for it. Then the only other reason given by the right hon. Baronet was, that the agricultural interest thought the present law might be altered with advantage. Now, if the right hon. Baronet was right in attributing the distress now prevailing in the manufacturing districts to other causes than the Corn-law—if the right hon. Baronet, the Secretary for the Home Department, was right in what fell from him last night, when he gave evidence of the flourishing state of the spinning trade, by the great increase of mills within the last few years —if that were so, why was the agricultural interest now attacked by the Government? If that were the case, and the right hon. Baronet only proposed his measure because the agriculturists thought that the scale might be altered with advantage, he wished to know why he proposed the particular scale of duty which he had laid before the House. He supposed he (Sir R. Peel) thought the agricultural interest were of opinion that it might be amended in this particular manner in consequence of something which had taken place in the county he had the honour to represent in October last. On the 25th of that month, his hon. Colleague addressed his constituents, and in that speech he said, that a scale very similar to that proposed by the right hon. Baronet would afford enough of protection to the home-grower. Indeed, the scale proposed by him on that occasion ranged no higher than 20*s.*, and came down gradually sliding to 5*s.*; but it was so coolly received, that the hon. Gentleman had himself given notice of his intention to propose that the scale should reach 25*s.* as the *maximum.* He would ask the right hon. Baronet whether he did not think he might be wrong in his scale of duties, when even the scale of his hon. Colleague was found to be so unpalatable in the county of Lincoln, that that hon. Gentleman himself had been compelled to give notice of his intention to propose an amendment upon the scale of the right hon. Baronet? He was going to amend even his own proposition. The right hon. Baronet seemed to have formed his scale of duty from the averages during the last ten years, and assumed them to have been 56*s.* 11*d.*; but the farmer did not obtain anything like that price. It was well known, that the greater quantity of corn was sold in the third quarter of the year; it was in that quarter the merchants sold, in order to make up the averages; but then the farmer had scarcely any to sell. He would not go into detail on that part of the subject; but, in order to prove his position, he would state the sales in one year:—In the first quarter of 1841, there were sold 949,156 quarters; in the second quarter, 860,484 quarters; in the third quarter, there were sold no less than 1,121,339 quarters; and in the fourth quarter, 984,838 quarters. Those figures showed, that the greater quantity was sold in the third quarter, and the average then was 60*s.*; but the merchant obtained all the benefit of that state of things, for the farmer, having then no corn to sell, did not participate in the advantages such a price gave. The average was 56*s.* 11*d.* throughout the other three quarters of the year, when the farmer was in the market. The right hon. Baronet took his position between 54*s.* and 58*s.*, now he had no hesitation in saying, on the part of his constituents, that that would not be considered a remunerating price. In his opinion, and those on whose behalf he appeared as a Member of the House, an average of 60*s.* was necessary; and, if the House would allow him, he would endeavour to show that the proposition of the Government with respect to the averages would be of little or no benefit in checking the fictitious sales. By the scale proposed by the right hon. Baronet, when the prices averaged from 54*s.* to 58*s.*, the duty was to be 16*s.* per quarter; he did not consider that that duty would afford sufficient protection. He had taken some pains and trouble to ascertain the quantities of corn which had been imported into this country at a duty above 16*s.* during the last ten years. They were as under:—

Years.	Quarters.	Average Aggregate Duty.
1831	30,622	22*s.* 7*d.*
1832	116,127	27*s.* 10*d.*
1833	11,044	32*s.* 2*d.*
1834	163	41*s.* 2*d.*
1835	47	27*s.*
1836	997	36*s.* 8*d.*
1837	210,256	30*s.* 9*d.*
1838	19,456	27*s.*
1839	49,688	18*s.* 9*d.*
1840	299,354	20*s.* 8*d.*

It appeared to him, that this quantity of corn imported in 1840, the merchant paying an average aggregate duty of 20*s.* 8*d.*, was sufficient to prove to any one that a duty of 16*s.* would afford no protection whatever. He took it for granted, the Government were of opinion that their proposed scale was an improvement on that now in force, but when they found so large a quantity imported at so high a duty as 20*s.* 8*d.* [Sir *R. Peel:* What was the price then?] The price was then 66*s.* to 69*s.*; but he would again say, that when they found so much, so large a quantity imported, paying so much higher a duty than 16*s.*, the latter could afford no protection to the farmer. He had stated his opinion, that the measures proposed by Government for remedying the fraudulent averages would not produce a beneficial effect. It was proposed to remedy this evil, by adding to the towns from which the averages were now taken a number of other towns. In many of the towns, however, which it was proposed to add to the list, there was very little corn sold during the latter part of the year; and he feared the plan would fail to accomplish the end it was designed to effect. He thought, there would be no difficulty in making an arrangement for the return of the averages by the grower, as well as by the purchaser. This principle of taking the averages had been recommended by many practical men. There was no doubt it was considered by farmers generally, that the scale of duty proposed by the right hon. Baronet opposite was too low, and that the scheme which had been proposed was not so favourable to their interests as they had anticipated. He could assure the House, that the farmers did not think they had now more protection than they were fairly entitled to expect. He believed, that when the farmers of England found that the Government, which they anticipated would protect their interests, was lowering the protection on corn, and facilitating the introduction of foreign wheat into the market, they would think with him, that they had acted rashly in placing confidence in such a Government. He supposed, that the scale of duties proposed by the Government had been adopted, in a great measure, upon the information they had received from Mr. Meek. He had in his hands a letter which had been received by a friend of his from a gentleman in Germany, containing some remarks on the visit of Mr. Meek to that country; and it would appear from the statements in that communication that, from the mode in which Mr. Meek conducted his inquiries, he was not likely to obtain much information on the subject it was his object to investigate. The noble Lord read an extract from the communication to the following effect:—

> "Mr. Meek was a few hours at Lubec, but proceeded the same day he came here to Rostock. The corn speculators amused themselves with his total ignorance of this country. He assured them, that if the English Corn-laws were altered, all the sandy soils would grow turnips and wheat immediately. I should like to have seen this wiseacre to learn how I can grow turnips on our sands, where everything burns to snuff in our usually warm summers."

When the farmers of Lincolnshire learned that the person who had recommended the scale of duties proposed by the right hon. Baronet, had made such a statement as this, he was convinced they would wish that a better agent had been selected. Before he resumed his seat, he wished to prefer to the Government a humble request, that they would seriously and attentively consider a better measure for taking the averages, because he believed it was the unanimous opinion of the farmers of the county he represented, that the scheme at present proposed by Government would afford them little protection. The system of taking the averages, as at present existing, was the subject of general complaint by the farmers; the numerous fictitious sales which were made, led to the introduction of bonded corn, and, the market being thus glutted, the farmers' prices were lowered. He was aware, that those who were opposed to the sliding scale, would gather an argument from what he had said, and would contend, that the sliding scale was the great source of the evils to which he had alluded. But he was of opinion, that a fixed duty would be injurious to the country, that it would be impossible to maintain it when the price of corn was high; and that they could not adopt a rate of duty sufficiently high to protect the farmer when the price of corn was low. He believed that, by a more stringent system of taking the averages, they might act most beneficially upon the principle of a sliding scale; and he therefore felt it his duty to oppose the motion which had been proposed by the noble Lord near him.

Mr. *Christopher* said, the noble Lord who had just addressed the House had thought fit to cast some reflections upon him, in reply to which he deemed it necessary to offer a few observations. It was not his intention when he entered the House to take any part in the debate; but he could not avoid congratulating the House, and especially that portion of it which supported the agricultural interest, on the new-born zeal of the noble Lord who had last spoken. When they considered that at the commencement of the last session of Parliament his noble Friend had thought fit to vote for an address to the Crown, which attributed all the distress which prevailed in the manufacturing districts to the operation of the Corn-laws, he thought that it ill became him, on the present occasion, either to attack him for deserting the interests of his constituents, or to come forward and explain to the House that the manufacturers were not distressed from the operation of the Corn-laws. Considering that his noble Friend had on more than one occasion recorded his vote of confidence in favour of an Anti-Corn-law Administration, it ill became him to doubt the sincerity of his right hon. Friend at the head of the Government in coming forward with the present measure. His noble Friend had been pleased to state, that he (Mr. Christopher) was the first person who had recommended to his constituents the adoption of a maximum duty of 20*s*. on importations of foreign corn. He had thought it his duty, in consequence of a vote at the commencement of the last session of Parliament, when he thought that not only his noble Friend and those who acted with him, but that both Houses of Parliament, were pledged to entertain the question of the revision of the Corn-laws, to apply his mind to the subject, and to state to his constituents what modification of duty he thought would be beneficial. He did not say on that occasion, that he thought a maximum duty of 20*s*. ought to be levied on the importation of foreign corn. He had stated that, as the noble Lord had said that foreign corn could be introduced into this country in any quantity, exclusive of duty and profit, at the price of 36*s*. a quarter, the maximum duty of 20*s*. was sufficient; that if it could be introduced in any quantity under 30*s*., a maximum duty of 25*s*. would be sufficient; but if, as it had been stated, a considerable quantity could be introduced at 23*s*., a maximum duty of 30*s*. ought to be imposed on the importation of foreign corn. He had taken the opportunity of making that statement not in any part of the county which he represented, where he might be supposed to be supported either from local interest or party feeling, but he had made that declaration in the presence of many adherents of a near relative of the noble Lord; and whether he had said on that occasion that a maximum duty of 20*s*. or of 25*s*. was a sufficient protection, he must say, that what he had said had been not only well received, but had been cheered by the persons who lived on the estate of that relative of the noble Lord, and it was not till six weeks after that the noble Lord, more for the sake of embarrassing the Administration of this country than with the view of obtaining a settlement of this question, had chosen to agitate this country and his own tenants on this subject. It might be expected that a panic arose in consequence of this agitation; but this he would say, from information he had received from the county he represented, that ever since the proposition of the Government had been considered, the great majority of the constituent body of that county would rather accept the measure as it was, than any measure which any combination of the noble Lord's friends might propose. He had given notice of a motion, that when the House resolved itself into a committee, he would state to that committee good and sufficient reasons for inducing them to adopt a maximum duty of 25*s.* in lieu of the duty proposed by her Majesty's Administration. But whether the House agreed to his proposition or not, so persuaded was he that it was desirable to have a permanent settlement of this question for the benefit of agriculture, and for the benefit of those individuals whom he and whom the noble Lord (Lord Worsley) also represented in that House, that he would infinitely rather see the measure of the Administration pass without a single alteration than he would see the agricultural interest left to the mercy of the noble Lord. With regard to what his conduct had been, either in the presence of his constituents, or as a Member of that House, he was not afraid to appear before them, and to enter the lists with the noble Lord whenever the occasion required it. The noble Lord had thought fit to impute to him what had been imputed to him by a former Member of that House, that he had acted the unworthy part of concerting with the Administration to overthrow the agricultural interest. He appealed to his right hon. Friend at the head of the Government, whether, directly or indirectly, he had ever made any communication to the Government on the subject of the Corn-laws, till he had stated his opinions publicly in the presence of his constituents.

Lord *Worsley* hoped the House would allow him to say that he did not intend to cast any reflection on the hon. Member. He had merely said that the hon. Member had formerly proposed a plan which he opposed in his amendment, and this, therefore, showed that his former plan, which agreed with the proposed measure of the Government, was unpopular with his constituents.

Mr. *G. Berkeley* was not going to desert the landed interest, nor did he fear being charged with attending too much to the demands of the middling classes of the population; and even if he had but that one reason it would guide his vote that night. He thought that by adopting a sufficient fixed duty we should get rid of the present gambling transactions, which pressed so hard on the manufacturer, while the sliding scale did not in any way protect the agricultural interest. Under these circumstances he should support the amendment.

Sir *R. Peel* said,—Mr. Speaker, after the demand which I was obliged to make on the attention of hon. Members in bringing forward the measure now under discussion, I shall certainly feel it incumbent upon me to limit myself as strictly as possible within the bounds which the nature of the motion prescribes, and confine myself altogether to the issue which is proposed by the noble Lord. I am a little surprised at the nature of the issue raised by the noble Lord. I am quite aware that I have to contend against two classes of antagonists, entertaining entirely opposite opinions, the one led by the noble Lord—the advocate of a fixed duty; the other coincident with the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Roebuck)—a decided enemy to all duty whatever. And I was a little curious to know by what process these two classes of antagonists could be brought to range under the same banner. The noble Lord I expected to affirm that a fixed duty ought to be preferred to a sliding scale. I heard much when the noble Lord was in the Government—much from him in condemnation of those who, opposing his measures, did not clearly announce their own plans. "Concert, if you please" (the noble Lord used to say), "the rejection of the measure we propose, but if, giving your assent to abstract propositions, you resolve to combine against the measures of her Majesty's Government, in that case it becomes the character of a great Opposition, to leave on record the principles on which they have acted." The noble Lord used to say, "It is very well for you to act in opposition to our measures; you are not charged with the duties and responsibility of government; but you have had a long public life; you enjoy the confidence of a great party; these measures have undergone frequent discussion, and the country really wants to know what are the principles on which you oppose them." Such being the language which the noble Lord used to hold when in the Government, I certainly did expect to find the noble Lord meeting us fairly on the grounds on which, in his opinion, the measure which we propose cannot be entertained; I did expect from him, after all the eloquence which I have heard from him against ambiguous abstract resolutions, a full and complete exposition of his own principles. How they who are the advocates for a total repeal of all duties on foreign corn can vote for the resolution of the noble Lord, I confess I cannot understand. It is a matter of wonder to me how any advocate of a fixed duty can be found to concur with the noble Lord in his proposition. The noble Lord merely affirms,

> "That this House, considering the evils which have been caused by the present Corn-laws, and especially by the fluctuations of the graduated or sliding scale, is not prepared to adopt the measure of her Majesty's Government, which is founded upon the same principles, and is likely to be attended with the same results."

Why, Sir, fixed duty lurks under this ambiguous phraseology. He who moves the resolution is in favour of a fixed duty. How it can find approval with you, who are opposed to all duties whatever—how it can be worth your while to vote for this motion, which you know perfectly well involves in it, ambiguous though the words may be, the principle of a fixed duty and nothing else, I confess I am at a loss to imagine. The motion which the noble Lord ought to have made—I mean, if he intended to maintain his own declared principles—would have stated distinctly and clearly what were the principles which he was prepared to recommend the House to adopt in preference to the principles of our measure. I thought the noble Lord would have presented us with some such motion as would have brought fully and fairly to issue the question whether a fixed duty is preferable to a sliding scale; and if the noble Lord had acted on former precedents, his motion would have been this—

> "Resolved, that no settlement of the question of the Corn-laws can be permanent or satisfactory which does not include within itself the principle of a fixed duty."

Acting on the precedent of the year 1835, when it was difficult to bring men of conflicting opinions to join in a common course and unite in a common vote, that would have been the resolution which the noble Lord would have brought forward. But in this case opinions are even more discordant than they were in 1835, and the noble Lord has not had the benefit of a compact alliance; if on this occasion the noble Lord had fairly announced in his resolution the principles on which he was prepared to act, and, consequently, it was necessary for the noble Lord, and the advocates of total repeal, to concert what might be the best mode of covering the grounds on which they are severally prepared to support the same proposition, and how they might best hope to conceal from that enlightened public who, we are told, have their scrutinizing eyes upon us and our proceedings, what are the real differences between the noble Lord and the parties whom he expects to support him to-night. But in fact my conflict to-night is not a conflict with a fixed duty, and I must say that, in respect of the general principles which have been laid down by the noble Lord as those on which he should have legislated on this question, there is no material discordance between us. I also fully agree with the right hon. Gentleman, that the great object which we ought always to maintain in view in legislating on the corn duties is the welfare and benefit of the great body of the people; and I think that man not a true friend to the agricultural interest who, for the purpose of conferring any temporary benefit on that interest, tries to effect his object by calling on the great body of the public to sacrifice real advantages. Then, with respect to the opinions of the noble Lord, he said, that he would submit to any odium rather than agree to do what he considered to be injustice to the agricultural interest; he said that the agricultural interest would be entitled to protection on two grounds—first, if they were subject to any peculiar and special burdens; secondly, if in consequence of the long endurance of laws originally, perhaps, defective in their principle, the agricultural body had been led, under the sanction of the legislature, to embark their capital, and had entered into engagements on the faith of what the legislature had done,—then, that though in principle it might be competent for you to retrace your steps, yet, nevertheless, the considerations of sound justice and equity forbade you to return; but, on the contrary, imperatively demanded that you should continue to foster the interests which had grown up under your management. I say, then, that if these be the sentiments of the noble Lord with respect to the agricultural interest, I don't know, as I said before, that I materially differ from the noble Lord, and whatever difference there is between us is not a difference of principles, but a difference only as to the mere nature of the measure which is fit to be adopted in order to carry out those principles, and it is because we are of opinion that we shall so best carry out those principles, that we propose a graduated scale on the footing of a duty, varying inversely as the price, and diminishing as the price rises, but guarding the agricultural interest against competition when the price is low, as far as is consistent with the interests of the consumer, and abandoning the duty when the interests of the consumer requires its abandonment. I consider that a better principle than the principle of a fixed duty, and therefore it is that I propose it for the adoption of the House. A fixed duty, indeed, the noble Lord now seems inclined to abandon. "We will have no sliding scale," says the noble Lord, but still the noble Lord in one case adopts a sliding scale. The difference between the noble Lord and me is that he slides on one leg. The noble Lord is prepared to maintain the system of averages to determine when the duty at certain prices shall cease altogether. Well, I think that my plan is the better of the two, because, as was justly observed in his able speech by my right hon. Friend the Vice-President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Gladstone), because the noble Lord keeps on the fixed duty of 8*s*., when the price is at 72*s*., but at 73*s*. or 74*s*., determining the price by the averages, the noble Lord proposes that the duty shall altogether cease. Now, if combinations can exist under the present system for the purpose of raising the averages, and if there is now, when corn is at 70*s*., inducement to hold till it reaches 73*s*., what an immense inducement to hold back will there be when the difference of 2*s*. in the price makes a difference of 8*s*. in the duty. And then with respect to America, the merchant there, finding the duty here remitted when the price is at 73*s*., ships his corn; but the holders here have poured in corn upon the market in the meantime. It is then said to be their interest to combine to raise the duty. They do combine, and the price falls in consequence to 72*s*., and the duty rises to 8*s*., and the American merchant is left to put up with the failure of his speculation. The noble Lord must, therefore, confess that after six months' time for deliberation, the only amendment which he proposes leaves unremedied almost all the defects of the present system. Sir, an attention to the debate that has occurred during these three evenings, the conflicting opinions expressed by many hon. Members, and the different apprehensions entertained, must have convinced any Gentleman, however wedded he may be to his own opinion, that to endeavour to effect a settlement of so complicated a question as the Corn-laws is a task of no ordinary difficulty. Contrast the speech of the noble Lord the Member for Lincolnshire to-night with that of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade last night. [An hon. *Member.*—The late President of the Board of Trade]. The ex-President of the Board of Trade, I mean. He spoke with such authority that I thought he was still in office. But contrast those two speeches. The right hon. Gentleman told us last night that my mode of taking the averages would diminish the price, and raise the duty to the amount of 5*s*.; but what does the noble Lord tell us to-night? He tells us that the greatest alarm had been excited in the county of Lincoln on account of the mode in which I propose to take the averages, for that, in point of fact, it would prejudice the farmer to a most material extent. At the views of the right hon. Gentleman I confess I am surprised. I am surprised that he should have given utterance to an apprehension so unfounded. All I can say is, that I utterly disclaim the idea of affording any additional protection to agriculture by the altered mode of taking the averages; and if, on a consideration of the working of that system, I should be convinced that it will have any effect which I had not anticipated, I shall be prepared to consider the effect of so taking them. I hold it quite to be legitimate to correct any frauds that may now exist; but as to attempting to afford any additional protection to agriculture by an altered mode of taking the averages, that is false in principle, and I have no intention of effecting it. Whatever protection for agriculture I take, I will take openly. But then the noble Lord the Member for Lincolnshire tells us to-night that there are scarcely two persons in that county who are satisfied with the scale as fixed with regard to wheat, but that as regards oats and barley the scale fixed upon had met with unanimous and universal condemnation. Why, Sir, those different opinions, urged as fair objections to my measure, I look upon as conclusive proofs of the policy of our modifying our opinions. To effect any satisfactory settlement that shall carry with it that degree of assent and good-will which all great public undertakings of the kind ought to carry with them, we ought to look to the opinions of extreme thinkers on the one hand, and on the other. We must look to the views of the advocates of free trade, and the advocates of continued protection, each differing to some extent and degree from each other, and from the proposition before the House. But while we observe the manner in which the proposal is dissented from by these two extremes, we must look to that intermediate class of persons which I am confident exists, which will deliberately consider the proposal, and examine the evidence in its favour and against it. And though they may not be entirely contented with the details, they will admit, that, on the whole, it is just and reasonable, and that being a good measure, it ought to be adopted as speedily as possible. Seeing the violence of the opposition with which I have been assailed for proposing this measure, and the disappointment and dissatisfaction that have been expressed in some of the manufacturing districts, and again, on quite opposite grounds, in some of the agricultural districts,—all which opposition I must have naturally expected,—I am supported through all this opposition by the consciousness that my colleagues and myself have attempted to suggest that which we believe to be wholesome at the time, and likely to obtain that practical good which ought to be the object in touching a great question of this sort; and that, on the whole, looking at the artificial state of the system affected by it, and the complicated and important interests that are involved, I declare again that our object has not been to conciliate the favour of any party; that we have not proposed the measure to secure the interests of any particular class; but looking at the whole complicated interests of this country, we have offered this, under circumstances of great difficulty, as a great improvement on the existing law, and as itself an advantageous measure, which will meet the wishes of the moderate thinkers on all sides, and one which ought, if agreed to, to be adopted as speedily as possible. And here let me refer to something which fell from the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite (Mr. Roebuck), who, in a speech characterised by his usual ability, advised me to discard all class prejudices, to show, not perhaps that I am in advance, but at all events, that I do not lag behind the intelligence of the age, and to bring forward some grand and comprehensive scheme that would stamp me at once with the character of a great statesman. I will tell the hon. and learned Gentleman what I think belongs more to the true character of the Minister of such a country as this. I think it is more in keeping with that true character for me to aspire to none of those magnificent characteristics which he has described, and that the wisest and safest course for me to adopt is to effect as much practical good as I can, and not by pronouncing panegyrics upon general principles, which might obtain temporary popularity and praise, delay even a partial remedy for evils the existence of which all acknowledge. Now, considering the great difficulties attending this question, and forgetting, as I must forget, if I hope for any satisfactory termination of them, the minor interests of party, and those party differences which have caused so much asperity in former debates, and remembering that I am in a very different position as Minister of the Crown from the hon. and learned Gentleman, and also now from the noble Lord the Member for the City of London,

—situated as I am, I must try to effect a practical adjustment of this question as much to the satisfaction of the general classes of the community as I can. The hon. and learned Gentleman would find it easy, it seems, to apply the great principle of free trade to this question, but I am compelled to look to the mighty interests that have grown up under the system of restriction. You, the hon. and learned Member, give me an estimate of the corn grown in this country; you tell me of 22,000,000 quarters of wheat, and in all 45,000,000 quarters of grain; now think of the amount of capital engaged in the production of that enormous quantity of 45,000,000 quarters of grain. Think what pecuniary interests must be involved in the production of such an amount of grain. Think, too, of the amount of social interests connected with those pecuniary interests which are also involved—how many families are depending for their subsistence and their comforts upon the means of giving employment to thousands, before you hastily disturb the laws which determine the application of capital. All these considerations you may disregard or overlook in your haste to apply the principles of free trade; but let me tell you, if you do so, you are the real enemies of the application of those principles. If you disregard those pecuniary and social interests which have grown up under that protection, which has long been continued by law, then a sense of injustice will be aroused, which will revolt at your scheme of improvement however conformable it may be to rigid principle. How many leases have been formed under the existing system—under the faith of these laws? Take the case even of the tenant-at-will, and how can you instil into him the idea that it is a landlord's question, and not a tenant's question? His capital is embarked in agriculture. Do you thing it possible not strongly to affect that capital by pouring in millions of quarters of corn duty free, diminishing his means in the same degree that you diminish the price of corn in the home market? Do you think you can safely disregard the position in which the tenant-at-will even would be placed by the adoption of your free trade principles? But in the case of the farmer who is under a lease on the faith of the endurance of your acts of Parliament, what would you do? If the laws have been defective that is not his fault. If for 140 years you have continued the protection to agriculture, is it possible lightly to regard the interests which have grown up under it? 140 years of protection are no proof that that protection has been in itself wise; but if you have continued the protection for 140 years, that is a decisive reason why you should touch most lightly and carefully the interests which have been established under that protection. Take the case of your own acts of Parliament —take the case of the Tithe Commutation Act which you passed some seven or eight years ago. You assume in that act that a certain price of corn shall determine the amount of rent charge for which hereafter each tithepayer shall become responsible. You vary the price, it is true, year by year, and the amount of rent will vary with the price, but the original quantity will remain, the number of bushels, whatever may be the price which shall hereafter continue to be paid, and that appears to me a conclusive reason why, in approaching this subject, you should make with the greatest caution any change in the laws for the protection of corn. Take the case of Ireland. The noble Lord proposes to admit at once oats there at a duty of 3*s.* 2*d.* or 3*s.* 4*d.*, I forget which. The right hon. Gentleman proposes to admit oats from all parts of the continent duty free. Does any one think that this would be either wise or just? Ireland having been in the habit of sending 3,000,000 quarters of grain annually to this country, would it be either politic or just at once, and without notice, that corn having been ground and sent here upon the faith of your own legislation, either to admit oats, barley, or wheat, the growth of the continent, into your markets perfectly free, or at such a duty as 3*s.* 2*d.*? If at the same time that you alter the Corn-laws, and attempt to make an arrangement respecting corn, you should deem it desirable to inquire into the laws which affect the importation of other commodities, I must say, that I should wish to substitute for a system of prohibition a system of protection, at such duties as would insure ample security to him who had hitherto flourished while relying on the system of prohibition, that his interests would not be lightly interfered with. Again, I find that in Ireland there is a positive prohibition to the importation of flour. I cannot maintain the continuance of that prohibition, if about to make a settlement of the Corn-laws. There again important interests are involved; and when I look to the vast and complicated interests generally which are involved in this question of the provision laws, I say, in the first instance, it is absolutely necessary, if you wish to act consistently, that you should adopt any measure you may take with the greatest circumspection and caution; and, secondly, that I am convinced, whatever may be the clamour of those who sincerely believe that there should be no import duties upon provisions, that he who does act with circumspection and caution, will, in the end, be more likely to succeed than he who inflicts great injustice by hasty and precipitate legislation. It is upon these principles that the Government have considered this question of the Corn-laws, and it is in pursuance of these principles that I have submitted to the House a measure which is denounced by the eager advocates for free trade as a perfect mockery and delusion, and by some even as an insult to the sufferings of the people, but which I, notwithstanding those condemnations, do believe to be a great improvement in the existing law, which I do believe to be a concession of protection which the agricultural interest can make without danger, and which I do believe to be a measure which will at the same time permit corn to be imported into this country on a better principle than that which, under the existing law, has hitherto regulated its importation. Let me, for a moment, examine the scale, or at least the leading principles of the scale, which I propose. It certainly does at the price of 50*s.* fix a duty of 20*s.*; but then that duty is, under no circumstances, to be increased. The noble Lord says, that it is a prohibitory duty. The noble Lord, however, will find it very difficult to apply a duty which will not, under certain circumstances, amount to a prohibitory duty. The noble Lord spoke much of the advantage of putting the United States of America on the same footing as the Baltic. He said that, the United States was a power with which we ought to endeavour to carry on an extensive commercial intercourse; that it contained immense plains bordered by rivers, which would afford a ready means for the conveyance of exports and imports; and that it would be of the greatest advantage to us to be able at all times to carry on a trade with that country. But the noble Lord also said that the cost of a quarter of American wheat when brought into Liverpool would be 47*s.* Now, considering the disadvantages under which the United States stands with reference to corn, I should have thought that at that price no duty ought to apply; but the noble Lord fixes a duty of 8*s.* upon corn from America at the price of 47*s.*; and that being so, I would ask, whether, when the price of English corn is at 50*s.*, the noble Lord's fixed duty of 8*s.* would not, according to his own showing, amount to a prohibitory duty? It may be less a prohibitory duty than that which I propose. Yes; but that is not the question we are now examining. The noble Lord laid down the principle that there should be no prohibition, in order that there might be a constant importation from the United States; and I am endeavouring to prove, from the noble Lord's own showing—although in a degree my proposal may be more objectionable than his in the particular point in question—that when the price of corn was at 50*s.*, his duty of 8*s.* would operate as a prohibitory duty upon American corn. I do propose a duty of 20*s.* when the price is under 51*s.*—a proposal, I am aware, to which objection exists on the other side. But, in making it, I stated, what I now repeat, that I did think when the price of grain was under 51*s.* in this country, that there could be no public evil in prohibiting the importation of foreign corn! that 20s. would be sufficiently effectual for that purpose; and I also said, what I now say again, that I thought a superfluous protection involved nothing but positive obloquy and mischief. I vindicate that amount of duty, not for the purpose of protecting the special interests of particular classes, but because I think it important to give to the farmer that encouragement which shall induce him to continue a system of improvement, by preventing a sudden import of corn when that corn is not required for home consumption. I think it is for the public advantage, as well as for the farmer's own peculiar interest, that I should tell him upon whose labours we are now depending for 45,000,000 of grain—knowing the effect that a sudden influx of corn must have when corn is sufficiently abundant at home for all the purposes of the consumer—I do say it is for the public advantage that I should say to him, "Continue your improvements; I cannot undertake to guarantee to you by legislation a particular price, but this I will say, that as long as corn is under 51*s.* you shall not be exposed to the importation of foreign corn." And now let us take the intermediate part of the scale—let us take it at 56*s.* or 57*s.* Here the argument is, that according to Mr. Meek's papers, it is impossible that foreign corn could come into competition with home produce. Now, a greater fallacy I never heard in my life than that which has been made use of to prove that proposition, and to justify those who used it in saying, that my scale is as defective as the existing one—that it stripped the present scale of some of its evident deformities, but yet that it gave the same degree of protection, or rather that it as effectually excluded foreign corn when foreign corn could be of any advantage. Gentlemen placing those papers before them argue in this way—they say that it appears from the Consuls' returns that the price of foreign wheat would be on the average 40*s.* 6*d.*; that the charge for conveyance would be 5*s.*; and that consequently foreign corn could not be introduced into the English market at a less price than 45*s.* 6*d.*, which a duty of 16*s.*, supposing the price of home corn to be 56*s.*, would raise to a prohibitory price. Now, that is one of the greatest fallacies I ever heard. They add up together the entire prices given by the Consuls at all the different places, including Antwerp, where the price is 55*s.* 6*d.*, and Rotterdam, where it is 55*s.*, places where the price is entirely governed by the English market. The fair way to determine the question, when the price at home is 58*s.*, 59*s.*, or 60*s.*, is to take those places from which foreign corn may be imported at the lowest price. By that means I will prove to you the utter absurdity of your mode of taking the averages. Supposing there are only two places from which corn can be brought—supposing that at Odessa wheat is 26*s.*, and at Antwerp 56*s.* 5*d.*, united these two prices make 82*s.* 5*d.*; divide them, and you have an average of 41*s.* 2½*d.* Now would it not be absurd for any man to argue that we are safe from the corn at Odessa because the average price of it, when united with that of Antwerp, was 41*s.* 2½*d.*, at which price foreign corn could not be introduced. In what a miserable plight would that corn-merchant be who founded his speculations upon such a principle as that? The question then is, not what Odessa wheat may average in price when united to that of Antwerp, but what is the price of wheat at Odessa, what the charge for freight from Odessa, and what the price at which wheat can be brought into the English market from Odessa? I will take the case of Danish wheat. I think in determining whether foreign wheat can come in at a given price, it is important to consider the questions—first, as to the port from which that wheat is sent; and secondly, as to the quantity that can be exported from that port. Now what does Mr. Meek say with regard to Denmark? He says,

> "The prices of corn in Denmark have, during the last twenty-five years, averaged—for wheat, 28*s.* 10*d.* per quarter; rye, 19*s.* 9*d.* per quarter; barley, 14*s.* per quarter; oats, 10*s.* 6*d.* per quarter. Considering the depression of the corn market during the greater part of that period, and that the prospect of a permanent sale of corn in England will be likely to render the continental markets more steady and more firm than they have hitherto been, it is probable that the prices, free on board, would not be much below the following quotations:—wheat, from 30*s.* to 31*s.* per imperial quarter; rye, from 22*s.* to 25*s.* per imperial quarter; barley from 16*s.* to 20*s.* per imperial quarter; oats from 12*s.* to 15*s.*"

And he adds that—

> "In case of a regular and steady demand in England for foreign corn, the quantity produced in Denmark and Sleswick Holstein, might, without much difficulty, be considerably increased."

And in passing a law regulating the importation of foreign corn, is it not wise to deliberate upon what may be the possible supply in future years? Is it not a wise principle of legislation not to take wholly the prices of corn now, but to consider what may be the increased improvements by railways or otherwise, what may be the effect of a regular demand, and what may be the diminished freights? Ought we not to take all those things into account when we propose to legislate, without ever having the opportunity of retracing our steps, at least so far as the agriculturists are concerned? Mr. Meek says, further, that

"The freight of wheat to the east coast of England, in ordinary times, varies from 3*s.* to 3*s.* 6*d.* per quarter in summer, and from 4*s.* 6*d.* to 5*s.* per quarter in autumn, and for the other sorts in proportion."

And that

"The prices of corn per quarter paid in the interior are scarcely to be ascertained with any degree of accuracy. They vary considerably, almost each province, and even each town, delivering a different quality of grain. The prices that have been paid in the provinces during these latter years, so far as the same can be ascertained, appear not to have exceeded the following:—For wheat 23*s.* 6*d.* to 29*s.* per quarter; for rye 17*s.* to 20*s.* per quarter; for barley 10*s.* 9*d.* to 15*s.* 6*d.* per quarter; for oats 8*s.* 6*d.* to 10*s.* 6*d.* And in 1841:—For wheat 35*s.*; rye 23*s.*; barley 16*s.* 6*d.*; oats 11*s.*"

And he adds that

"The freight of grain by water from the provincial ports to Copenhagen, Kiel, or Elsinore, may be computed at from 1*s.* 4*d.* to 1*s.* 8*d.* per quarter, adding to the cost of conveyance the expense of removing, warehousing, and turning the grain, putting it into condition, loss in measure, and shipping charges. The total expense at the port of shipment would amount to from 2*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* per quarter greater, on an average, for the several descriptions of grain."

And thus many experienced persons in Denmark

"Are of opinion that if the trade in corn were made constantly open at a moderate duty, wheat and corn generally would be grown in Denmark to a much greater extent than it is at present."

I think, then, that if I show that the price at Elsinore is 28*s.* 10*d.*, and that the freight from Denmark does not exceed 4*s.* per quarter, I prove that, at least from Denmark, corn would be introduced into this country when the price is less than 61*s.* per quarter. But you will say the quantity grown in Denmark is insufficient to supply the wants of our population. Now, what does Mr. Meek say on this point? He tells us that the average export of wheat from Denmark is from 150,000 quarters to 200,000, in addition to 250,000 quarters of other grain; and Mr. Meek adds, that that quantity, great as it is, might be exceeded if corn were shipped from thence to any considerable extent— that is to say, 700,000 quarters of corn might be brought here in years of moderate growth. Then, I say, if prices are below 50*s.* in England, and there is a great quantity of surplus wheat in Denmark, do not discourage home production, do not chill the expectations and blight the hopes of your own farmers by permitting the Danish agriculturist to throw a quantity of his corn at a low rate of duty into your market, and so damage the prices of your own produce. It is on that principle of protection to your own growers that I found my measure. I cannot hope that this country will ever be entirely exempt from dependence to a certain extent on foreign supply. I do not doubt but that some corn must be imported, but what I say is, do not import corn to the injury of your own producers, but import it as a supplemental supply to fill up any deficiency in the products of your own soil. When you tell me that the habits of the people are formed in correspondence with their consumption of food—when you tell me that the comforts of the people are dependent to a great extent upon that supply, you only convince me that my proposition is a just one—that you ought to draw your supply mainly from your own soil, and not expose yourselves to the hostilities, to the caprice, or to the failure of the crops, of foreign countries. I tell you, if you do so, the time will come when you will repent it. When your wheat harvest is deficient, and you are suddenly obliged to place your reliance upon a foreign supply, you may find that that reliance is not a safe one, and that it would have been better to have promoted the growth of your own corn. I know that you think such a doctrine as that opposed to your principles of free trade; but in discussing a question like this—in considering that prices are more peculiarly affected by influences which fluctuate, and must of necessity be uncertain—I own it appears to me that the strict principles of free trade cannot be applied without danger to the interests of the community. But my main object is to show, that with respect to some countries, the scale of duty, as I have fixed it, between 54*s.* and 60*s.*, will admit of the import of foreign corn, and of the application of your general principle. That application may not be to so great a degree as you desire, but it is infinitely greater than you believe. Now let us take the upper parts of the scale. I want to show you, by a comparison with any other hitherto proposed, that my scale is infinitely more beneficial to the consumer. Take the duty I propose to levy when wheat is between 64*s.* and 72*s.*, a period which certainly indicates severe pressure upon the people. Let us compare my scale at these prices with other scales that have been submitted, remembering that my principle is, that above 60*s.* the interest of the consumer ought to be considered. Of course, the interest of the consumer ought to be considered at all times; but when prices are at that amount, what I contend for is, that then they ought to be specially considered, and that the interest of the farmer should be, in comparison, overlooked. Now, look at the scale of duties I propose to levy at these critical periods. And here I cannot help saying—I really must say—that I cannot understand how sensible and enlightened men, like some of the hon. Gentlemen opposite, can for a moment conceive that my scale is no improvement. How can they hold that I offer no benefits to the consumer? Why, just look at the scale I propose, and compare it with that at present existing. According to my proposition, when wheat is at 64*s.* the duty will be 8*s.*; the present duty is 22*s.* 8*d.* Can any one say that I do not relieve the consumer? When wheat is at 65*s.* I propose that the duty shall be 7*s.*; the present duty is 21*s.* 8*d.* I propose a 6*s.* duty on wheat at 66*s.*; the present duty is 20*s.* 8*d.* I propose that the 6*s.* duty shall continue until the price is at 68*s.*, and then it diminishes 1*s.* upon every shilling the price rises. But you say that this scale offers no security that the holders of corn will not continue to hold. Can you deny that the inducement to hold is rendered infinitely less? Will there not be an inducement in the natural operation of commercial enterprise to bring the corn into the market, and sell it even when the duty is 6*s.* a quarter? Now, suppose the price of wheat to be 66*s.*, at which price a duty of 6*s.* would be levied, that duty continuing until the price reaches 68*s.* Now, what would be the natural feeling of the holder of corn under such circumstances as these? Would he not say, it is better to realise at once than to wait until the price reaches 68*s.*? Would he not argue that it might be dangerous to take the chance of a rise in the price, accompanied by a corresponding fall in the duty? He would naturally be disposed to think, that others might be importing, and that the consequence might be a diminution in the price, which would prevent him from throwing his wheat into the market with advantage. These calculations, I say, would no doubt enter into the importer's consideration, and influence his conduct; and, under such circumstances, it is my firm conviction, that corn would be brought in at the 6*s.* duty in such quantities as would afford a very great relief to the consumer, and a protection to the agriculturist from all the disarrangements which follow upon the sudden influx at a duty of 1*s.* But now, having compared the probable operation of my scale with that at present existing, let us compare it with that proposed by Mr. Canning. What was Mr. Canning's scale? He proposed, that when wheat was 64*s.* the duty should be 12*s*; I fix the duty at 8*s.* I propose, that when wheat is 65*s.* the duty should be 7*s.*; Mr. Canning fixed it at 10*s.* When wheat is 66*s.*, I propose a duty of 6*s.*; Mr. Canning proposed to impose a duty of 8*s.* Now, take the noble Lord's scheme. Compare the high prices under his proposal with the high prices under my scale of duties, and I am sure all reasonable persons will form the conclusion, that my proposal is much more advantageous for the consumer. From 64*s.* to 72*s.*, the noble Lord proposes to levy a duty of 8*s.* According to my scale the duty at 70*s.* will be only 4*s.*, whilst at 73*s.* it will be merely the nominal sum of 1*s.*, the noble Lord's duty being 8*s.*, unless he reduces his scale by the sudden diminution he spoke of the other night. Why, it is impossible not to to come to the conclusion, that of the two propositions mine is infinitely the more advantageous to the consumer. It is impossible to draw any other inference, and I beg to say, that that inference is drawn by those who are better judges upon this subject than we ourselves. I ask you to judge, not by the apprehensions of the agriculturists, or the denunciations of the free-trader, but to examine the reports of those who are most conversant with the corn trade. Why should there be a universal combination on their part to speak favourably of this scale? The hon. Member for Coventry, by whose speech of last night I was much amused, represented all those dealers in corn as innocent doves, whom it is very easy to deceive. The hon. Gentleman predicted, that under my scale there would be at first a great relief; he admitted, that if it should pass into a law, great many holders of foreign grain would not keep up their corn in the hopes of pouring it in at a duty of 8*s.*, 7*s.*, or 6*s.*, and that the pressure on the consumer would be diminished. If the hon. Gentleman, then, will only let my bill pass into a law, I have his admission, that there would be a great relief to the trade. But then the hon. Gentleman saw great danger of having his argument refuted by this admission, and he said,

> "These corn-dealers will be deluded at first; they will not understand the operation of the new law; but the time will very shortly come when they will be aware of the advantages they may gain by operating so as to lower the duties, and then do not calculate that you will not again have the same frauds repeated."

Why, was there ever anything so absurd as to suppose that a corn dealer will not have a pretty good notion of what is for his own advantage? Every speech hear in which a gentleman is betrayed into a fit of candour, contains some sentence from which I can perceive, that amid all the loud denunciations which are indulged in, there is a confident assurance on the part of the speaker that my scale is an immense improvement. And those attempts which are made to deprive me and my plan of the credit of the advantage which will result from it, if in two months after the passing of the law great relief will ensue to the consumer, by showing that I am hoodwinking and deceiving the dealer in foreign corn, only show to what shifts intelligent gentlemen are reduced in order to find in it matter of censure. I received this morning from Liverpool the circular of one of those unfortunate gentlemen who are so easily deceived, dated Corn-Exchange, Tuesday, February, 15, in which it is said,

> "The new scale must be considered a very important change."

Compare the rates at which corn can be imported into Liverpool under the present scale, and under that which is proposed.

> "The present price of wheat on an average of six weeks is stated in the circular at 61*s*. 10*d*. a quarter. The duty which the holder of foreign corn would have to pay at present is 25*s*. 8*d*.; under the new scale it would be 11*s*. On barley the present duty is 18*s*.; by the new bill it would be 9*s*. On oats the duty is now 16*s*. 9*d*; by the new bill it would be 6*s*. On rye it is 9*s*. 6*d*.; by the new bill it would be 2*s*. 6*d*. On beans it is 18*s*. 3*d*.; by the new bill it would be 8*s*. 6*d*. On peas it is 16*s*. 9*d*.; by the new bill it would be 7*s*. 6*d*."

This is the scale which is said to be a miserable delusion and deception on the public when prices are high, and to offer no advantage to the commercial interests. Then as to flour, the article in which the Americans are so much interested, this circular states, that at the present moment the import duty on American flour is 15*s*. 5¼*d*. per barrel, whereas under the new scale it would be 6*s*. 6*d*. But then it is said there will be no real advantage in this, for I take no precautions against the practice of frauds on the averages. I say it is impossible that Gentlemen can seriously entertain this opinion if they will examine the figures. I should ask any rational man who examines my scale to say whether it is consistent with truth and sound argument to assert that I am practising a miserable delusion upon the public, and that I give no advantage to regularity in the trade. Nothing can be so various as the opinions by which I am assailed one after the other. Some disinterested persons tell me to abandon the scheme and retain the present law. No doubt, it would be better to have such a great grievance to complain of. That is what some wiseacres advise, in the hope that public indignation will be directed against me. I think I take a better part in attempting an improvement. Then the noble Lord (J. Russell) advises me to propose an 8*s*. duty, in the hope of allaying all opposition from every quarter. Do not disturb, says the noble Lord, unless you settle. The retention of old customs is, according to Lord Bacon, very unwise; but the disturbance of old customs, unless you settle and arrange peaceably and amicably, is more unwise still! The noble Lord tried an 8*s*. duty last year. If he had proposed that duty now, does he hope he could carry it with satisfaction and contentment to all parties? Let the noble Lord sound to the detachment of allies who hang upon his left flank, and who, although they may vote with him, have not, I think, aided him very materially in the discussion. They seem to me to have shown more innocence during its progress, because they feel that those high and enlarged principles of which they think themselves to be advocates are not at stake. But supposing the noble Lord sure of a majority for his duty of 8*s*., does he think that would be a permanent and satisfactory settlement of the question? If the noble Lord had carried it last year, this year as a Minister he would have come forward to amend it. Light has broken in upon him now which he then did not perceive; I speak it not to his dispraise. I ventured to warn him last year not to be too confident of maintaining an 8*s.* duty when prices rise high, and that he might be certain that a pressure would be made upon him to induce him to abandon it. He and others then thought an 8*s.* duty could be rigidly maintained, but this year, in order to calm apprehension, he is willing to provide the means of dispensing with the duty when prices rise. Now, I must say that the Corn-law which involves in itself a self-executory principle, and is enabled to work without calling in the intervention of Parliament or the Privy Council, has a great advantage over one which requires the interference of the executive for the purpose of regulating commercial duties. Therefore, if the noble Lord tells me that many on his side are dissatisfied with my plan, and that the disturbance of old customs is, according to the sage advice of Lord Bacon, an unwise thing, unless you make a permanent and satisfactory settlement, he must, I think, abandon the hope of acting in strict conformity with the advice of that philosopher if he supposes that an 8*s.* duty will secure him from hearing again on the subject of the Corn-laws. The House will perhaps agree with me that it was necessary for me to vindicate my scale from some of the imputations which have unjustly, as I think, been cast upon it. I know well the difficulties which attend all arguments and statements on this subject; and when I try to answer unreasonable objections by showing that foreign corn may be imported under my scale, I am perfectly conscious that I fortify the objections of those who are adverse to any change. I know I cannot stir one step in a matter on which opinions are so divided without exposing myself to this. If I try to calm an apprehension here, I see a note taken on the other side; if I try to answer an unreasonable objection there, I am met, not by obstacles, but by the intimation of alarm on this side; and it is whispered from one to the other that I am conceding too much. This is inseparable from the task I have undertaken. I do believe that in a mere party sense it would have been wiser for me to say—I will stand by the Corn-laws, and resist all change. Some tell me that all the change required is an amendment of the averages. But other considerations other responsibilities, press upon those who are charged with the administration of affairs. I stated before, and I repeat, that in considering this question, the arrangements which ought to be made consistently with enlarged and comprehensive views—avoiding disturbance of capital embarked in agriculture, and the clouding of the prospects of worldly prosperity and social happiness of those who derive their subsistence from land—looking again to the state of commerce, to the advantage, when there is to be a supply of corn, of so introducing that corn that there may be the least disturbance of the monetary system of the country, the greatest approach to regular commercial dealings, the greatest encouragement consistent with due protection to agriculture, to manufacturing and commercial industry—having to consider all these questions—having to weigh their relative and comparative importance, the measure upon which we have determined is that which we conscientiously believe to be upon the whole the most consistent with the general interests of the country. We did not confer with agricultural supporters for the purpose of insuring their concurrence—we did not permit the abatement of it in this particular or in that, in order to insure its success. I gave a proof, I think, that I was ready to incur some risk to the Government by persisting in advising that which I believe to be for the best. Upon these principles we shall continue to act. We shall expect, no doubt, from some, violent opposition; we shall fear from others extravagant apprehensions; our reward will be the consciousness that we have acted on the principles which we believe to be right; our hope and confidence in success will be, that when the first storm of passion may have passed away, and when clear judgment and reason, and the examination of the documents which we have presented, shall mitigate unjust apprehensions on the part of the agricultural body, then, though extremes may not be reconciled and may continue irreconcileable, yet, after the old practice in this country, reason and moderation will gravitate towards that which is just; and, supported by that reason, supported by those who may differ as to degree, but who agree in thinking this a positive substantial improvement, we entertain a confident hope that we shall triumph over all obstacles, and have the satisfaction, without injuring the agricultural, and with benefit to the commercial and manufacturing, interests, of amending the laws which regulate the import of provisions into this country.

Viscount *Palmerston* said, at the close of the last Session of Parliament I ventured to express the apprehension I entertained that the measure which the Government announced their intention to propose in the present Session of Parliament would not satisfy the expectations of the country—that it would be merely some re-adjustment of the sliding scale, or some change in the central pivot—and I took the liberty of saying, that such a measure would give satisfaction to none. The measure proposed by the right hon. Baronet has justified the apprehensions which I entertained, and has realised the feelings which I then took the liberty of expressing. After five months' deliberation, after ransacking the continent for information, the Government has now come forward with a measure, which, I take leave to say, is at least imperfect and incomplete for the purpose, and which has justly been denounced by the noble Lord near me, in that terse and epigramatic language of which he is so able a master, as a measure that disturbs everything, and settles nothing. What has been the result of the proposition of the right hon. Baronet? It has been that while on the one hand the Government has dissatisfied hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House, on the other hand also it has displeased the great bulk of his own friends [" *No, no!*"]. I think that the truth of this assertion is to be found in the silence with which hon. Gentlemen on that side of the House received the speech of the right hon. Baronet the other night, a silence not only expressive, but eloquent. The right hon. Baronet has himself admitted that this measure gives almost universal dissatisfaction. He has described it in a very lively manner—he has justified the course which the Government have taken, upon what they consider their sense of duty, but he has plainly admitted that the measure is not one which has met with the approbation which he wished for. The Government must have taken their stand upon the law as it is, if, as they assured the House on a former occasion, they thought that it was a good measure, and one which it was inexpedient to alter. If they had taken that course, they would no doubt, have been supported by the cordial voice of the great bulk of this House [" *No, no!*"]. To have taken that course would, I have no doubt, have secured the adoption of their plan, and would, perhaps, have been for the immediate interests of party. Another mode of proceeding, was that dictated by a belief that the state of the country required a change of these laws. If they were desirous of considering the feelings of the people, and of attempting to apply a remedy to the distresses of which we hear so much, they might have taken a bold course—they might have disregarded the opinion of those around them, and, supported by the recent information which they have obtained, and disregarding the taunts of those who disapprove of such a course, they might have recommended a practical freedom in the trade in corn. Such a course, no doubt, would have been opposed by many of those who now support them. There would have been a temporary secession of some of their ordinary supporters, but they would have obtained support from other quarters. They would have carried their measure, and that course would have been best for the country, as well as for the permanent interests of the Government. They had taken neither course. It was not given to man, much less to men in office, to please all parties; but it had been given to the present Government to displease almost every one. I am aware, however, that the measure of the Government will be carried. I have no doubt that it will be carried, and that though few hon. Members opposite will be found to express their acquiescence in it, they will be found voting with the Government. Now I am against this scale, I am against the other scale; and admitting if you will, with the right hon. Baronet, that the scale he now proposes is a mitigation in some respects of the scale as it now exists, though it is liable to some objections which the right hon. Baronet overlooked—because, when the right hon. Baronet says that his proposition affords less scope for gambling, and such like speculations, than has hitherto existed, I think he is mistaken—I believe that it is not calculated to meet the evil which is complained of. The scale of the right hon. Baronet arrives at the vanishing point by a smaller mitigation than the former scale, but it affords, perhaps, an additional temptation to persons to contrive to raise the price to that at which the duty vanishes. Because, under that scale persons so combining would feel that if they should not raise the price, a heavy duty must be paid, whereas by the present scale, if they fail in getting it up to the vanishing point, the failure can but little add to the duty which they will have to pay, and, therefore, the House will see that the proposed scale does not afford the advantage which the right hon. Baronet expects. I have no hesitation in saying, that I am for a fixed duty. I am not an advocate for a fixed duty upon the principle upon which those who have spoken support the sliding scale—upon the principle of a protection to agriculture; but I am an advocate for it upon the general principle that foreign corn is a proper object of taxation. I am sure, if we entered into a calculation as to the average of protection which should be distributed between the agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial interests, we should get into a labyrinth of difficulties from which there would be no escape. I do not agree with an opinion expressed by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Dorchester, in a speech which he made to his constituents a short time ago, when he held a doctrine which was repudiated that night by the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government, and stated that the sliding scale should be so constructed that the growers of corn should not only have protection in years of plenty against low prices, but that in times of scarcity it should insure them against risk for their bad crops. Was not this nothing more nor less than to insure them against the contingencies of the seasons? You do not do this in any other trade. You do not call upon the merchant and tell him that you will insure him against any loss of cargo by the accidents of sea, or for other deteriorations which the property they are bringing home may sustain. In case any articles of commerce were wanting in one place, the traders were permitted to send to another for it, and its free entrance into this country was not forbidden in order that the price might be raised, and that certain parties may be compensated. I object to the application of this principle to the agricultural interest. I hold that the landlords and the cultivators of the soil should calculate against loss like persons engaged in other pursuits, and make allowance for the contingencies of the seasons. I am not the advocate for a fixed duty for the reasons given in favour of a protecting duty by the right hon. Baronet, that the farmer and cultivator of the soil should be protected when the price was below a certain point, and when prices were above it that the consumer should be looked to. I contend for the principle, that you are justified in levying taxation for the purposes of revenue only; therefore, I do not see why the importation of corn from abroad should not take place when you levy such a duty as not to interfere or impede an abundance of supply. Such being my views, I object to the sliding scale; and I must say, that throughout the whole of the speech of the right hon. Baronet on the former occasion, as well as on the present evening, I do not remember to have heard any argument in favour of a sliding scale, in contradistinction to a fixed duty, and certainly no argument for the proposed scale, or against the existing one. The right hon. Baronet, on making his proposition to the House, stated that when it appeared expedient to make an alteration in the Corn-laws, that the subject should be introduced in the speech from the Throne, and that this should be followed by a prompt explanation of the proposed measure, and stated why this was not an unfitting time for the determination of the question. But, at the same time, he omitted to state to the House the evils of the present scale, and why it was expedient for the Government to alter it at the present time. Was this accidental? No, I do not believe it. The right hon. Gentleman is too experienced a debater, and had been too much accustomed to conflicts of this nature, to deal with hidden weapons; but he must have well known that any argument that he could have adduced in order to show that the present system worked ill, and that, therefore, it was desirable to make a change in it, would have told against his present scale. It would have been manifest that any argument which he urged against the present scale applied, in principle at least, against the proposition which he now makes. I say, therefore, it was on this ground that the right hon. Baronet abstained from stating any reasons which induced the Government to propose to make a change in the present law. If the right hon Baronet wished to conciliate the agriculturists, and, at the same time, to relieve the distress of the country, he stated those matters which were not reasons for the proposed alterations. He stated, that the distress which existed so extensively, did not arise from the operation of the present system of Corn-laws, and that the alteration which he proposed, would not do much good or much harm, and the only reason he gave for making the change, was, that the agriculturists had a superfluity of protection, and that, therefore, they could, without any very great loss, make a sacrifice of this superfluity, in consequence of the sufferings of the other classes of the community. I contend, that a sliding scale, modify it as you will, contains in itself fundamental principles which render it a much less expedient mode of keeping up the object of the Corn-laws, than a fixed duty, supposing that fixed duty always to be moderate in its amount. What we proposed last year, was a fixed duty of 8*s*. a-quarter; but the right hon. Baronet has this night almost convinced me, that this was too high, and that such an amount would be almost as prohibitory as the scale which he proposed. I do not admit this; but what I contend for is, that the duty should be fixed and known, and that it should not be allowed to vary with the rise or fall of prices in the market. If a moderate fixed duty was established, you would have a complete change in the trade altogether—you would have an entirely different system of transactions in the corn-market; for instead of gambling transactions, you would establish a sound and advantageous trade; and, instead of the merchant hurrying at every rise in price to the foreign market on the continent—for the distant markets are now hardly touched—and thus at once enhancing the price of corn, you would establish a steady and well-regulated barter, which would at the same time supply your wants and open new fields for the consumption of the produce of your manufacturing industry. Under such an arrangement, the merchant would make his arrangements for buying a supply of corn in those places where it was cheapest, and would bring it home at a period when he thought, that it could be best disposed of, both to the country and to himself. Above all, you would extend greatly your commercial relations with the United States. Commerce would not be carried on between the two countries on the uncertain footing, that it was at present, and occasioning a constant confusion by the flowing of bullion from one country to the other; but there would be an uniform trade by our exchange of manufactures on the one hand, for corn on the other. What was the state of the corn-trade as it stood? No man could tell from week to week, or from month to month, what to do, or what operations to embark in. The merchant felt he was obliged to wait until a bad season raised the price of wheat in the home-market. He then went to the nearest market, where he thought, that he could get a ready supply of corn. But did he succeed in getting a ready supply in the foreign ports on the continent? No; for no foreign capitalist would purchase wheat, and lock it up in warehouses, on the uncertain chance of such a demand; he would not run the risk of locking up his capital by the purchase of corn to store up for the contingent demand of the English market, at the end of, perhaps, two, three, or four years, for during that time, his capital must be idle, and remain unproductive in his hands. The English merchant went where he believed he could get a supply of corn, namely, one of the great sea-ports of the continent; but he seldom or never could meet with a supply of corn in such a place, at the moment, for not much more corn was stored, than was required for the people on the spot. For the most part, corn was grown at a distance from those ports, and being a bulky article, it took a considerable time to bring it down for exportation. The merchant was in a hurry, and feared that others from different quarters would get the better of him, and that there would be such an efflux of corn into the home-market, within a short time, as materially to lower prices. The consequence was the necessity of purchasing at a disadvantage, and there was a great rise of prices in the ports on the continent, and if you pay the foreigner much more for his corn than you would do, if the trade was at all regular, a great deal of money was necessarily thrown away. If, then, there was a fixed duty, it would be the means of producing a revenue to the country, instead of our being exposed to constant loss, as at present. Again, you must pay a higher freight for your shipping, to bring corn from the continent, for the merchant was obliged to take those vessels on the spot at almost any charge, and of course those for the most part would be foreign ships. Therefore your shipping interest suffers; whereas, with a regular trade and barter, British ships would go out with cargoes of manufactures, and come back with cargoes of corn, to the profit of the British instead of the foreign shipowner. And, then, as to the arrangement for payment. You cannot send your commodities to a foreign consumer unless you take in payment what he has to give. If you do not take his corn, except perhaps once in four or five years, you can have no means of paying with your goods for that corn when you want it. You must, therefore, send out bullion for that corn. You must take it from the Bank, and then comes the derangement of your currency, Your currency must be restricted, and panic, distress, and bankruptcy follow. Does any man think that landowners and farmers do not suffer in those common convulsions which agitate all the families and disturb all the property in the country? I venture to say that upon the most long-sighted regard to their own interests, those engaged in the cultivation of land and the owners of the soil would prefer a system which would relieve them from those perpetually recurring panics and distresses, even if it tended—and I do not think it would tend—to a temporary sacrifice of their annual income. These are the evils of the sliding scale with regard simply to the internal interests of the country, and with regard to the interest of persons engaged in commerce. But beyond that, this law affects your relations with almost all foreign countries. When you ask them to make treaties of commerce with you, you are met by taunts about your tariff. You are told "We cannot come to an understanding about the admission of manufactures, because you do not take the produce by which alone those manufactures can be paid for." Then you are gradually excluded by retaliating duties from different markets to which otherwise you might have free and constantly increasing access. Why, Sir, in this way your manufacturing industry is cramped and crippled. I may be told that, in spite of these difficulties, the all-conquering energies of the British people do surmount these obstacles, and your manufactures and commerce do continue, and I trust will continue annually to increase. But it is no answer to me, to tell me that, in spite of difficulties, you export annually a greater quantity of manufactures. If that be so, then I tell you, in reply, that you forego a positive and large increase of commerce, which you might, by adopting our principle, secure to yourself. I say that these are the evils of the sliding scale. To this no answer whatever has been given, that I have heard, by any person who has spoken in the course of this debate. We are told, indeed, that this question is to be considered not merely in its commercial, but also in its political bearings; and although the right hon. Baronet partly repudiated the principle, or, at least, qualified it in his speech to-night, we have been repeatedly told that this great country ought to be independent of foreign nations for its supplies of food. I venture to say, that notwithstanding the right hon. Baronet has admitted considerable exceptions to that principle, many will vote in the division with him to-night who hold that doctrine, and are influenced by it in their decision. Why, what a childish doctrine is this? Independent of foreign nations for its supply of food!—a nation in which several millions of men live by foreign commerce calling itself independent of foreign nations for the means of subsistence for its people. Why, Sir, those who depend on foreign commerce for the means by which they buy their bread, are, to all practical purposes, as dependent on foreign nations for food, as if the food which they bought was grown on a foreign soil. A man many starve in the midst of plenty, if he has not the means to purchase subsistence. Your fields may be filled with luxuriant harvests, and yet the face of the starving manufacturer may grow pale with pining famine. There was a period of the greatest distress in Ireland—when the people were dying of want, and when, at the same time, cargoes of wheat were leaving the ports to supply the markets of England; the people had not the means of purchasing the food, and some of them perished with hunger, while food—I was going to say an abundance of food—was leaving the country. Sir, I contend it is a perfect fallacy to say that a country, in which a large portion of the people subsist by foreign commerce, whose wages, the means of purchasing their food, depend upon foreigners, or the productions of foreigners—for if foreigners did not produce they could not buy—it is, I say, a perfect fallacy to call such a people independent of foreigners, or to think, by any arrangement or contrivance, to give them such independence. But, sir, there are larger grounds on which this doctrine ought to be repudiated by this House. Why is the earth on which we live divided into zones and climates? Why, I ask, do different countries yield different productions to people experiencing similar wants? Why are they intersected with mighty rivers—the natural highways of nations? Why are lands the most distant from each other, brought almost into contact by that very ocean which seems to divide them? Why, Sir, it is that man may be dependent upon man. It is that the exchange of commodities may be accompanied by the extension and diffusion of knowledge—by the interchange of mutual benefits engendering mutual kind feelings—multiplying and confirming friendly relations. It is, that commerce may freely go forth, leading civilisation with one hand, and peace with the other, to render mankind happier, wiser, better. Sir, this is the dispensation of Providence—this is the decree of that power which created and disposes the universe; but in the face of it, with arrogant, presumptuous folly, the dealers in restrictive duties fly, fettering the in-born energies of man, and setting up their miserable legislation instead of the great standing laws of nature. Sir, I am convinced, whatever may be the result of this night's debate, that reason will prove more powerful than error. I am satisfied that the truth is strong enough to sweep away the cobwebs of fallacy by which it is attempted to entangle it. There may be some delay before the consummation that I desire shall arrive. There may be an interval of much and deep suffering felt by millions. I trust they will bear that suffering with patience. I trust they will look to the gradual, but I hope, speedy diffusion of enlightened principles on this question. The seeds of good which have been sown in these discussions will not be slow to ripen and bear fruit. The Government has made one step, though a small one, in the course of sound policy. Yes, they have broken ground—they have quitted their entrenchments. I trust, that having once got them to move down from their fortress, they will meet us on the plain, and, though their first movements may be attended with a temporary success—we may be defeated now, of course—I do not look to anything at present—I know very well the strength of your majority, but I hope and trust, I confidently expect, that at no distant period the mind of this country will be so far enlightened on the subject, that the same deference to public opinion, which has wrung this reluctant concession from the Government, will finally extort from them an approximation, if not a full and complete adoption, of the sound principles of legislation on this all-important subject.

The question was put as follows:—

"That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That" to the end of the question, in order to add the words,

"This House, considering the evils which have been caused by the present Corn-laws, and especially by the fluctuations of the graduated or sliding scale, is not prepared to adopt the measure of her Majesty's Government, which is founded upon the same principles, and is likely to be attended by similar results."

Question put,

"That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question."

The House divided:—Ayes 349; Noes 226: Majority 123.

List of the AYES.

Acland, Sir T. D.
Acland, T. D.
Ackers, J.
Acton, Col.
Adare, Visct.
Adderley, C. B.
Alexander, N.
Alford, Visct.
Allix, J. P.
Antrobus, E.
Archdall, M.
Arkwright, G.
Ashley, Lord
Ashley, hon. H.
Astell, W.
Attwood, J.
Attwood, M.
Bagge, W.
Bagot, hon. W.
Bailey, J.
Bailey, J. jun.
Baillie, Colonel
Baillie, H. J.
Baird, W.
Baldwin, C. B.
Balfour, J. M.
Bankes, G.
Baring, hon. W. B.
Barneby, J.
Barrington, Visct.
Baskerville, T. B. M.
Bateson, Sir R.
Beckett, W.
Bell, M.
Benett, J.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Beresford, Capt.
Beresford, Major
Blackburne, J. I.
Blackstone, W. S.
Blake, M. J.
Blakemore, R.
Bodkin, W. H.
Bodkin, J. J.
Boldero, H. G.
Borthwick, P.
Botfield, B.
Bowes, J.
Bradshaw, J.
Bramston, T. W.
Broadley, H.
Broadwood, H.
Brodie, W. B.
Brownrigg, J. S.
Bruce, Lord E.
Bruce, C. L. C.
Bruen, Col.
Buck, L. W.
Buckley, E.
Buller, Sir J. Y.
Bunbury, T.
Burrell, Sir C. M.
Burroughes, H. N.
Campbell, Sir H.
Campbell, A.
Carnegie, hon. Capt.
Cayley, E. S.
Chapman, A.
Charteris, hon. F.
Chelsea, Viscount
Chetwode, Sir J.
Cholmondeley, hn. H.
Christmas, W.
Christopher R. A.
Chute, W. L. W.
Clayton, Sir W. R.
Clayton, R. R.
Clerk, Sir G.
Clive, hon. R. H.
Cochrane, A.
Cockburn, rt. hn. Sir G.
Codrington, C. W.
Cole, hon. A. H.
Collett, W. R.

Colville, C. R.
Compton, H. C.
Connolly, Col.
Coote, Sir C. H.
Copeland, Mr. Ald.
Corry, right hon. H.
Courtenay, Viscount
Cresswell, B.
Cripps, W.
Crosse, T. B.
Damer, hon. Colonel
Darby, G.
Dawney, hon. W. H.
Denison, E. B.
Dick, Q.
Dickinson, F. H.
D'Israeli, B.
Dodd, G.
Douglas, Sir H.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Douglas, J. D. S.
Douro, Marquess of
Dowdeswell, W.
Drummond, H. H.
Duffield, T.
Duncombe, hon. A.
Duncombe, hon. O.
Du Pre, C. G.
East, J. B.
Eaton, R. J.
Egerton, W. T.
Egerton, Sir P.
Egerton, Lord F.
Eliot, Lord
Emlyn, Viscount
Escott, B.
Estcourt, T. G. B.
Farnham, E. B.
Fellowes, E.
Ferrand, W. B.
Filmer, Sir E.
Fitzroy, Captain
Fleming, J. W.
Follett, Sir W. W.
Ffolliott, J.
Forbes, W.
Forester, hon. G.C.W.
Forman, T. S.
Fuller, A. E.
Gaskell, J. Milnes
Gladstone, rt. hn. W. E.
Godson, R.
Gordon, hon. Capt.
Gore, M.
Gore, W. O.
Gore, W. R. O.
Goring, C.
Goulburn, rt. hon. H.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Granby, Marquess of
Grant, Sir A. C.
Greenall, P.
Greene, T.
Gregory, W. H.
Grimsditch, T.
Grimston, Viscount
Grogan, E.
Hale, R. B.
Halford, H.
Hamilton, C. J. B.
Hamilton, J.
Hamilton, W. J.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Hanmer, Sir J.
Harcourt, G. G.
Hardinge, rt. hn. Sir H.
Hardy, J.
Hawkes, T.
Hayes, Sir E.
Heathcote, G. J.
Heathcote, Sir W.
Heneage, G. H. W.
Heneage, E.
Henley, J. W.
Hepburn, Sir T. B.
Herbert, hon. S.
Hill, Sir R.
Hillsborough, Earl of
Hinde, J. H.
Hodgson, F.
Hodgson, R.
Hogg, J. W.
Holmes, hn. W. A'Ct.
Houldsworth, T.
Hope, hon. C.
Hope, A.
Hope, G. W.
Hornby, J.
Hoskins, K.
Howard, hon. H.
Hughes, W. B.
Inglis, Sir R. H.
Irton, S.
James, Sir W. C.
Jermyn, Earl
Jocelyn, Visct.
Johnson, W. G.
Johnstone, Sir J.
Johnstone, H.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Jones, Captain
Kelburne, Visct.
Kemble, H.
Kirk, P.
Knatchbull, rt. h. Sir E.
Knight, H. G.
Knight, F. W.
Knightley, Sir C.
Law, hon. C. E.
Lawson, A.
Legh, G. C.
Leicester, Earl of
Lennox, Lord A.
Liddell, hon. H. T.
Lincoln, Earl of
Litton, E.
Lockhart, W.
Long, W.
Lopes, Sir R.
Lowther, J. H.
Lowther, hon Col.
Lyall, G.
Lygon, hon. General
Mackenzie, T.
Mackenzie, W. F.
Mackinnon, W. A.
Maclean, D.
MacGeachy, F. A.
Mahon, Viscount
Mainwaring, T.
Manners, Lord C. S.
Manners, Lord J.
March, Earl of
Marsham, Viscount
Martin, C. W.
Marton, G.
Martyn, C. C.
Master, T. W. C.
Masterman, J.
Maunsell, T. P.
Meynell, Captain
Miles, P. W. S.
Miles, W.
Milnes, R. M.
Mitchell. T. A.
Mordaunt, Sir J.
Morgan, O.
Morgan, C.
Mundy, E. M.
Murray, C. R. S.
Neeld, J.
Neeld, J.
Neville, R.
Newry, Visct.
Nicholl, rt. hon. J.
Norreys, Lord
Northland, Viscount
O'Brien, A. S.
Ossulston, Lord
Owen, Sir J.
Packe, C. W.
Paget, Lord W.
Packington, J. S.
Palmer, R.
Patten, J. W.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Pemberton, T.
Pigot, Sir R.
Plumptre, J. P.
Polhill, F.
Pollington, Visct.
Pollock, Sir F.
Powell, Colonel
Praed, W. T.
Price, R.
Pringle, A.
Pusey, P.
Rae, rt. hon. Sir W.
Ramsay, W. R.
Rashleigh, W.
Reade, W. M.
Reid, Sir J. R.
Repton, G. W. J.
Richards, R.
Rolleston, Col.
Rose, rt. hon. Sir G.
Round, C. G.
Round, J.
Rous, hon. Captain
Rushbrooke, Col.
Russell, C.
Russell, J. D. W.
Ryder, hon. G. D.
Sanderson, R.
Sandon, Visct.
Scarlett, hon. R. C.
Scott, hon. F.
Seymour, Sir H. B.
Shaw, right hon. F.
Sheppard, T.
Shirley, E. J.
Shirley, E. P.
Sibthorp, Col.
Smith, A.
Smollett, A.
Smyth, Sir G.
Smythe, hon. G.
Somerset, Lord G.
Somerton, Viscount
Sotheron, T. H. S.
Stanley, Lord
Stanley, E.
Stewart, J.
Stuart, H.
Sturt, H. C.
Sutton, hon. H. M.
Taylor, T. E.
Taylor, J. A.
Tennent, J. E.
Thesiger, F.
Thompson, Mr. Ald.
Thornhill, G.
Tollemache, hn. F. J.
Tollemache, J.
Tomline, G.
Trench, Sir F. W.
Trevor, hon. G. R.
Trollope, Sir J.
Trotter, J.
Turnor, C.
Tyrell, Sir J. T.
Vere, Sir C. B.
Verner, Colonel
Vernon, G. H.
Villiers, Visct.
Vivian, J. E.
Waddington, H. S.
Walsh, Sir J. B.
Welby, G. E.
Westenra, hon. H. R.
Whitmore, T. C.
Wilbraham, hn. R. B.
Wilmot, Sir J. E.
Wodehouse, E.
Wood, Col.
Wood, Col. T.
Worsley, Lord
Wortley, hon. J. S.
Wyndham, Col.
Wyndham, W.
Wynn, rt. hn. C. W. W.
Wynn, Sir W. W.
Yorke, hon. E. T.
Young, J.
Young, Sir W.

TELLERS.

Fremantle, Sir T.
Baring, H.

List of the NOES.

Acheson, Visct.
Aglionby, H. A.
Aldam, W.
Anson, hon. Col.
Armstrong, Sir A.
Bannerman, A.
Barclay, D.
Baring, rt. hon. F. T.
Barnard, E. G.
Bell, J.
Berkeley, hon. C.
Berkeley, hon. Capt.
Berkeley, hon. F.
Berkeley, hon. G. F.
Bernal, R.
Blake, M.
Blake, Sir V.
Blewitt, R. J.
Bowring, Dr.
Bridgeman, H.
Brocklehurst, J.
Brotherton, J.
Browne, R. D.
Browne, hon. W.
Bryan, G.
Bulkeley, Sir R. B.W.
Buller, C.
Buller, E.
Busfield, W.
Byng, G.
Byng, rt. hon. G. S.
Carew, hon. R. S.
Cavendish, hon. C. C.
Cavendish, hon. G. H.
Chapman, B.
Childers, J. W.
Clay, Sir W.
Clive, E. B.
Cobden, R.
Colborne, hn. W. N. R.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Collins, W.
Cowper, hon. W. F.
Craig, W. G.
Currie, R.
Curteis, H. B.
Dalmeny, Lord
Dalrymple, Capt.
Dashwood, G. H.
Dawson, hon. T. V.
Denison, J. E.
Dennistoun, J.
D'Eyncourt, right hon. C. T.
Divett, E.
Duff, J.
Duke, Sir J.
Duncan, Visct.
Duncan, G.
Duncombe, T.
Dundas, Capt. D.
Dundas, D.
Dundas, hon. J. C.
Easthope, Sir J.
Ebrington, Viscount
Ellis, W.
Elphinstone, H.
Esmonde, Sir T.
Evans, W.
Ewart, W.
Ferguson, Col.
Ferguson, Sir R. A.
Fielden, J.
Fitzalan, Lord
Fitzroy, Lord C.
Fitzwilliam, hn. G.W.
Forster, M.
Fox, C. R.
French, F.
Gibson, T. M.
Gill, T.
Gordon, Lord F.
Gore, hon. Capt.
Granger, T. C.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Grosvenor, Lord R.
Guest, Sir J.
Hall, Sir B.
Harford, S.
Harris, J. Q.
Hastie, A.
Hatton, Capt. V.
Hawes, B.
Hay, Sir A. L.
Hayter, W. G.
Heathcoat, J.
Heron, Sir R.
Hill, Lord M.
Hindley, C.
Hobhouse, rt. hn. Sir J.
Holdsworth, J.
Horsman, E.
Howard, hn. C. W. G.
Howard, hn. E. G. G.
Howard, hn. J. K.
Howard, Lord
Howard, Sir R.
Humphery, Mr. Ald.
Hutt, W.
Jardine, W.
Jervis, J.
Johnson, Gen.
Johnstone, A.
Labouchere, rt. hn. H.
Lambton, H.
Langston, J. H.
Langton, W. G.
Larpent, Sir G. de H.
Layard, Capt.
Leader, J. T.
Loch, J.
Macaulay, rt. hn. T. B.
M'Taggart, Sir J.
Mangles, R. D.
Marjoribanks, S.
Marshall, W.
Marsland, H.
Martin, J.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Mitcalfe, H.
Morris, D.
Morrison, J.
Mostyn, hn. E. M. L.
Muntz, G. F.
Murphy, F. S.
Murray, A.
Napier, Sir C.
O'Brien, W. S.
O'Connell, J.
O'Connell, M.
O'Connell M. J.
O'Conor, Don
Ogle S. C. H.
Ord, W.
Oswald, J.
Paget, Col.
Paget, Lord A.
Palmerston, Visct.
Pechell, Capt.
Pendarves, E. W. W.
Philips, G. R.
Philips, M.
Philipps, Sir R. B. P.
Phillpotts, J.
Pinney, W.
Plumridge, Capt.
Ponsonby, hon. C. F. A. C.
Ponsonby, hon. J. G.
Powell, C.
Protheroe, E.
Pulsford, R.
Ramsbottom, J.
Rawdon, Col.
Redington, T. N.
Rennie, G.
Rice, E. R.
Ricardo, J. L.
Roche, Sir D.
Roebuck, J. A.
Rundle, J.
Russell, Lord J.
Russell, Lord E.
Rutherfurd, rt. hn. A.
Scholefield, J.
Scott, R.
Scrope, G. P.
Seale, Sir J. H.
Smith, B.
Smith, J. A.
Smith, rt. hn. R. V.
Sombre, D. O. D.
Somers, J. P.
Somerville, Sir W. M.
Stanley, hon. W. O.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Stanton, W. H.
Staunton, Sir G. T.
Stewart, P. M.
Stuart, Lord J.
Stuart, W. V.
Strickland, Sir G.
Strutt, E.
Tancred, H. W.
Thornely, T.
Towneley, J.
Traill, G.
Troubridge, Sir E. T.
Tuite, H. M.
Turner, E.
Villiers, hon. C. P.
Villiers, F.
Vivian, hon. Capt.
Vivian, hon. Major
Vivian, J. H.
Wakley, T.
Walker, R.
Wall, C. B.
Wallace, R.
Ward, H. G.
Wason, R.
Watson, W. H.
Wawn, J. T.
Wemyss, Capt.
Westenra, hon. J.
White, S.
White, H.
Wigney, I. N.
Williams, W.
Wilshere, W.
Wilson, M.
Winnington, Sir T. E.
Wood, B.
Wood, C.
Wood, G. W.
Wood, Sir M.
Wrightson, W. B.
Yorke, H. R.

TELLERS.

Tufnell, H.
Parker, J.

Mr. *Villiers* rose to express a hope that the right hon. Baronet would enable him to bring on the motion, of which he had given notice, on Friday.

Sir *R. Peel* said, as they had as yet made no progress in forwarding the measure which he meant to submit, he trusted the hon. Gentleman would not postpone his motion beyond this day. He was quite sure, that they who considered this subject with a view to the practical result of the proposal made by her Majesty's Government must desire to see it submitted as soon as possible in the form of a bill to the House, and there would be ample opportunity for those who agreed with the hon. Gentleman to have their views canvassed at the future stages of the measure. When the hon. Gentleman called to mind that his right hon. Friend (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) postponed his motion on the ground that the debate would be continued another night, he hoped that for the personal accommodation of the House, the hon. Gentleman would accede to the wish which he had already expressed.

Mr. *Wakley* hoped, that the right hon. Baronet would consent to the postponement proposed by the hon. Member for Wolverhampton. The hon. Member's motion referred to a question upon which hundreds of thousands of the people had petitioned the House, and they would be disappointed if it were brought forward when the House was fatigued by a previous protracted debate. The proposition of the Government was to tax the bread of the people, and how did the House know whether the other propositions which the right hon. Baronet had not yet developed would not involve more taxes. The Government was very strong in that House, and he thought the right hon. Baronet ought to consent to the postponement proposed.

Lord *J. Russell* thought, the request made by the hon. Member for Wolverhampton was very reasonable. No discussion could take place on the question to which the hon. Member's motion referred, after the right hon. Baronet should bring in his bill. The proposition, as the hon. Member for Finsbury said, was supported by the prayers of a large body of the people, and on that ground he thought it but reasonable that a day's delay should take place before the motion was made.

Sir *R. Peel* had objected to the proposition for delay from no motive of personal convenience, but solely from a desire to promote the public interests. If, however, the hon. Gentleman still wished for a day's delay, he would not press his objection further; and as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had postponed his motion for to-morrow, he saw no reason why the House should meet to-morrow.

The House resolved itself into Committee, and resumed.

The Chairman reported progress—Committee to sit again.

Adjourned.

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HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, February 17, 1842.

Minutes.] Petitions presented. By the Marquess of Conyngham, from the Presbyterians of Stranorlar and Crumlin, to Legalize Marriages by Dissenting Clergymen.—By Lord Brougham, from Bromsgrove, Lauder, Lilliesheaf, Melksham, Newton on Falkland, Congleton, and Weavers of Jedburgh, for the Repeal of the Corn-laws.

Poor Law Chaplains (Ireland).] The Earl of *Clancarty* rose to move for the following returns:—

1st. The number of chaplains that have been appointed under the provisions of the 48th section of the Irish Poor Law, with the dates of their several appointments, their names, their religious denominations, their salaries, and the names of the Poor-law unions for which they are severally appointed.

2dly. Copy of any minute or resolution of the Poor-law commissioners declaratory of the principle upon which they determine the amounts of the salaries of the chaplain so appointed, with the date of the same; and should the amount vary as between the chaplains of different religious denominations, then a statement of the basis of calculation for determining the amounts of the several salaries; also

3dly. Copies of all correspondence or minutes of conversation had with any Bishops of the Established Church relative to the salaries to be paid to the Protestant chaplains; also

4thly. Copies of all correspondence or minutes of conversation had with Roman Catholic Bishops relative to the salaries to be paid to Roman Catholic chaplains.

5thly. Copies of all remonstrations made in writing or otherwise to the Poor-law commissioners against the inequality of the salaries to be given to the chaplains of different religious denominations. And also,

6thly. Copy of all correspondence between the Poor-law commissioners and her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department, or with the Chief Secretary for Ireland, upon the practice adopted by the Poor-law commissioners in regulating the salaries of the chaplains appointed, or to be appointed under the provisions of the Irish Poor-law Relief Act.

His object, the noble Earl said, in moving for these returns was to enable their Lordships to judge of the soundness of the principle on which the Poor-law commissioners had carried out the appointments of chaplains under the new act, whether they were of a religious character, or whether, as appeared to him (Earl Clancarty), they were directly inconsistent with Protestant religion in Ireland. It would be unnecessary for him to trespass at any length upon their Lordships' attention, and he trusted he should receive some indulgence, as he seldom addressed that House, and did so now on the impulse of duty only. In his opinion the returns would show that many of those appointments were not in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution, by reason of the undue preference given to Roman Catholic chaplains over those of the Established Church. He did not, on this occasion, willingly bring a charge against the Poor-law commissioners, for he believed they were, and particularly Mr. Nicholls, most zealous in carrying the Poor-law into effect, and that, as worked by them, it had generally done much good. What he complained of was, what he considered as an abuse of their power, in the preference given to Roman Catholic chaplains, who had, in many instances, salaries more than double those which were allowed to chaplains of the Established Church. He thought this ground of complaint was aggravated by the fact that those appointments were made in communication with Roman Catholic bishops, without, as he was informed, consulting the Protestant bishops. He would admit, that in Ireland, where so large a portion of the inhabitants were Roman Catholics and Presbyterians, some difference from the mode of appointing chaplains in England would be justifiable. It would be necessary to have Roman Catholic and Presbyterian chaplains, as well as those of the Established Church, in the workhouses generally, but he did not think that the commissioners were justified in making the salaries of the former double the amount which were given to chaplains of the Established Church. The 49th section of the Irish Poor-law Act provided for salaries for the performance of divine service, and for no other duties. The commissioners had, therefore, in his opinion, gone out of their way in awarding salaries for any other duties, as they had done with respect to the Roman Catholic chaplains. By this they had entailed a very heavy expense on the ratepayers, and at the same time tended to bring the labours of the chaplains of the Established Church into a lower estimation than those of the Roman Catholic chaplains. The principle that the last-named chaplains should have large salaries because they had much larger numbers to attend to, in the way of religious instruction, than the chaplains of the Established Church in the workhouses, was not a good one; for it would naturally be asked why the same principle should not be held good outside the workhouse walls? Before he had determined to bring this case under the consideration of their Lordships he had done all in his power to render that course unnecessary by communication with the Irish Poor-law commissioners; but he was told that the matter had been discussed in London, and that the Government had said that the commissioners had acted correctly, and in accordance with the principle laid down in the Gaol Act. This view of the case did not satisfy him, for he thought it a departure from the letter as well as the spirit of the Irish Poor-law Act, that the commissioners should have, as it were, associated themselves with the Roman Catholic bishops to give an ascendancy to Roman Catholicism within the walls of the workhouses. He was present during the discussion on the Irish Poor-law Bill, and he did not recollect, from anything which then transpired, that the commissioners could be justified in the course they had since pursued with respect to the appointment and payment of Roman Catholic chaplains. When he last communicated with the Irish Poor-law commissioners or with Mr. Nicholls on this subject, the answer he received was to this effect, that, after a full consideration of the whole case, her Majesty's Government did not feel it necessary to interfere with the discretion of the commissioners in the matter. In the belief that when the returns for which he was about to move were before the House their Lordships would be of a different opinion as to the exercise of this discretion, he would conclude by moving for them.

The Duke of *Wellington* said, I certainly, in the few words I am about to address to your Lordships on the motion of the noble Earl, shall endeavour to avoid as much as possible adverting to the delicate and important topics which the noble Earl introduced into his speech; but I do think, that the noble Earl, instead of confining his motion, which I may call a fishing motion, to the returns which he has sought, ought to have given notice of his intention to move your Lordships' to lay a bill on the Table to repeal that part of the Irish Poor-law Act, for the whole of the speech of the noble Earl was, in point of fact, but a complaint of that particular clause of the Irish Poor-law Act. He ought, consequently, to have given notice of his intention to move a repeal of that clause. I confess, for this reason, and knowing the difficulty of discussing this subject without adverting to topics of great delicacy, I consider this to be a case which ought to be left in the hands of Government, and that was the recommendation I gave to the noble Earl. Instead of that, the noble Earl has brought it forward here, and instead of bringing forward a motion for the repeal of the act, he has brought forward the present motion, for which he has not shown any grounds. He may have shown grounds for the first part of his motion, as to the members appointed, but with regard to correspondence and minutes of conversation, and all those matters, no ground whatever has been laid, except the noble Earl's recollection of conversations, which he himself held, and I hardly think such recollections of conversations are grounds for such a motion as this, and my disposition, therefore, is to move the previous question on the whole of the resolutions. Just look how the case stands in the English Poor-law Act, which was the model for this act. In that act there is a clause enabling the Poor-law guardians to appoint a clergyman of the Church of England to be chaplain of the workhouse. The legislature had this act fully before them when the Irish Poor-law Act was passed, which act contained a power to the Poor-law Commissioners to appoint not a clergyman of the Church of England, as in the other case, but three chaplains—one a clergyman of the Church of England, one a minister of the Protestant dissenting persuasion, another a clergyman of the Roman Catholic dissenting persuasion—three to each workhouse, and to fix such salaries for them as they should think proper. And not only this, but the legislature had before them, at the same time, the Irish Gaol Act, under which the grand jury had the power of appointing three chaplains to the gaol, and of giving them certain salaries stated in the law. This had been passed many years, and its working had been well understood long before the Irish Poor-law Bill was passed. But this, too, was not all with respect to the provisions of the Irish Gaol Act. That act provides that each clergyman shall, in turn, besides spiritual duties, perform certain specified duties in the gaol, and make out and keep certain specified accounts and this accounts for the special enactment in the Gaol Act with respect to the salaries of the three description of clergymen. Yet the legislature, having this law in full cognizance at the time, thought proper in the Poor-law Act to leave to the Irish Poor-law Commissioners the discretion of allotting as they thought fit the salaries of the different descriptions of workhouse chaplains. With regard to the parties for whom the spiritual duties of those chaplains were to be called into requisition, no doubt the Poor-law Commissioners thought one class would be pretty numerous, of another class it was doubtless thought there would be great numbers; whilst of a third class, fortunately, there would be but few. A difference of the respective numbers, too, would prevail in different parts of the country. One general rule, therefore, could not answer, and it must be left to the discretionary power of the commissioners, to whose discretion many other matters were also compelled to be left, and on this, perhaps, as well as on other points, sooner or later, some law will, I hope, be introduced to regulate the exercise of that discretion. With respect to the present instance of the exercise of that discretion, sc far as I have heard of it, I believe it to be perfectly proper. The duty to be performed is a spiritual duty in the very parish in which these clergymen reside. The duties to be performed are, in many instances, very extensive, and in others they are still more extensive. And what was the rule the commissioners laid down with respect to these salaries? It was this; that the maximum salary should be 65*l.* a year, and the minimum 25*l.* a year. The circumstances of that country rendered it necessary to assemble large bodies of persons in workhouses, in order to administer to their relief. It was desirable to afford them the benefit of spiritual instruction, and the public were willing to defray a part of the expense which might be incurred for that purpose. If there were one or two individuals, of a particular persuasion in a workhouse, could it be pretended that it was fit that for them the same sum should be expended as for a larger number—that as much was to be paid to the chaplain whose only duty was to attend on them, as to him who had to attend to nearly the whole number in the workhouse. Your Lordships cannot think that such should be the case, and will agree with me that it is most proper to move the previous question for the present, leaving it to the noble Lord to bring forward a bill for the repeal of the clause, when he will have an opportunity of stating the views he entertained upon this subject, and he might then make his motion as a foundation for his bill.

The Marquess of *Normanby* said, that, considering the official connexion which he had had with the first working of the Irish Poor-law Act, he trusted, that he might be allowed to express the very great satisfaction which he felt at the manner in which the noble Duke had met the motion of his noble Friend, inasmuch as it would be quite impossible for the Poor-law Commissioners to perform their delicate and arduous functions, unless motions of this description were discouraged. In spite of some flattering expressions towards Mr. Nicholls, any person who heard the noble Earl's speech must be convinced that it would be impossible for Mr. Nicholls, or any other person holding a similar office, to discharge the duties which devolved upon him, unless such motions were met in the manner which the present had been by the noble Duke. The noble Earl had not only moved for a repeal of the Irish Poor-law Act, but he brought charges of partiality and favouritism against those who had the administration of the Irish Poor-law, and accused them of disregard to the interests of the Established Church. He did not desire to comment severely on the noble Lord, because, as the noble Lord said, he was not accustomed to address their Lordships; but he would say the noble Lord should not make such charges against individuals who were perhaps as much attached to the Established Church as the noble Lord himself. The terms of the motion were in themselves novel, and in some parts—the noble Earl would forgive him for saying so—perfectly absurd; and he could not but express his satisfaction at the manner in which the motion was met by the noble Duke.

Lord *Brougham* begged to say one word on the subject. The noble Earl stated his case in very strong terms, and the manner in which his motion was worded was certainly very novel indeed. The noble Lord quoted passages from the motion read, showing that it would be impossible for a Protestant Bishop to speak to a Protestant, or for a Roman Catholic Bishop to speak to a Catholic, unless a minute was made of it and laid before their Lordships. He would, therefore, ask, was it possible that the House could sanction such a motion as this?

The Earl of *Clancarty* said, he well recollected that the noble Duke had not only recommended the production of minutes of conversations with reference to the Irish Poor-law Act, upon former occasions, but the noble Duke had insisted even upon the production of private letters. The noble Duke insisted that letters which were entirely of a private nature should be laid before the House. The noble Duke had already insisted also upon the production of the minutes of all conversations.

Lord *Brougham:* Those were conversations with Bishops, not with Poor-law Commissioners.

Earl *Clancarty* thanked the noble and learned Lord for that; but the noble and learned Lord seemed totally to have forgotten that the minutes of those conversations were already laid upon the table of the House. [Lord *Brougham :* Conversation with whom?] With the Commissioners. [Lord *Brougham:* But that is not your motion.] It must have been quite clear to any one, that the minute of the conversations he alluded to was between the Bishops and the Commissioners. Under those circumstances, he thought he was entitled to the production of the correspondence. That part of the motion, of course, which related to the minutes of conversation, must be withdrawn. Perhaps the motion had better be altogether withdrawn. With regard to what the noble Marquess had said about his remark relative to favour to the Established Church, he thought he had a right to say that there was no sincerity in their friendship to the Church. [*Cries of* " *Order, order.*"] He was not out of order, for an Act of Parliament prohibited certain Peers from voting on questions connected with the Established Church, on account of their insincerity. [The Marquess of *Normanby :* What Act?] The Roman Catholic Relief Act. Surely, then, he was in order in attributing to them insincerity in their friendship for the Church.

The *Lord Chancellor* said, the noble Peer was decidedly out of order.

The Earl of *Clancarty* was sorry for being out of order. He should not have brought forward this motion if the noble

Duke had not promised to give him every information. He had consulted with the Government beforehand. He had seen the Irish Secretary for Ireland that day on the subject, and they all alike adhered to this practice, which he considered objectionable. If their Lordships sanctioned the course taken by the Poor-law Commissioners, they would be sanctioning a course which was clearly illegal. He would withdraw his motion, but regretted the information he required was not afforded.

The Duke of *Wellington :* I beg that the noble Lord will explain to me and to the House whether I told him, as he states, that I would give him the information, after or before I had a knowledge of what his demands were? I told him some months ago that the information he called for I would give, but at the time I had no notion of what description of information he required. I certainly had an inclination to give the noble Lord all the information he desired, and I referred him to the Irish Government. But when I came to see what the information was that he desired—when I saw his notice of motion—I certainly did feel, and when I heard his speech I felt more strongly, that it was of that description that it was impossible for the House to grant. With regard to another observation of the noble Lord, I must say that the clause in the Act of Parliament required certain minutes to be preserved and produced to enable the House to have full information of the working of the measure.

The Bishop of *Exeter* thought the noble Earl was entitled to the thanks of the House for having brought this question forward. The principle which the noble Duke asserted with respect to so much being left to the discretion of the commissioners, he thought was not so understood when the English Bill or when the Irish Bill were before Parliament. Great powers—enormous powers—were given to the commissioners, and he thought it was understood that these powers should be exercised under the control of Parliament, and that the commissioners could be made responsible to Parliament for every act they committed. The noble Earl, he thought, had made out a *prima facie* case that there had been an undue depression given to the Established Church by the commissioners. He thought, that a stipend of 25*l.* a-year ought not to be given to the clergymen of the Established Church, when a much higher one was given to the Roman Catholic clergyman. The stipend, as he believed, was not given for instruction, but for the performance of service within the walls of the workhouse. He did not think that the noble Earl had been supported as he had a right to expect, and therefore he had risen to make these few observations.

Lord *Wharncliffe* was convinced that there had been no attempt to give the Roman Catholic religion any preference. If the right rev. Prelate referred to the act of Parliament, and compared it with the act in force in England, he would see immediately that a discretion in this respect ought to be given to the commissioners. It was said that the stipend was given for the performance of religious service only, and that, as the Protestant clergyman and Roman Catholic clergyman would do that equally, their salaries ought to be the same. The 49th clause said, that they were to be appointed not merely to perform religious service, but they were to be appointed generally as chaplains of the workhouses. It was left to the discretion of the commissioners to ascertain how many persons there were of different religions to whom spiritual instruction was to be afforded, and to pay the chaplains in proportion. Supposing that there were 490 persons who required the instruction of the Catholic clergyman, and only ten who required the instruction of the Protestant clergyman, ought their labours to be paid precisely the same? Surely it ought to be left to the discretion of the commissioners to say what sum ought to be paid to both.

Motion withdrawn.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, February 18, 1842.

Minutes.] Petitions presented. By Lord Stafford, from Presbyterians of the North of Ireland, and by Lord Brougham, from Presbyterians of Omagh, Drogheda, Ramelton, and Cumber, to Legalize Marriages by Dissenting Ministers; from Baptists of Red Lion-square, and from Perth, and other places in Scotland, for the Repeal of the Corn-laws.

Corn-laws—Petitions.] Lord *Kinnaird* presented petititions for the repeal of the Corn-laws from the provost and town-council, and other persons in Perth; from Cupar, and other places in Fife; and from Arbroath, Montrose, and places in the county of Forfar. The distress of the country, the noble Lord said, continued unabated, and there was no suggestion of a remedy. In Paisley nineteen thousand persons were supported by charitable contributions, and the funds in the hands of the treasurer were not sufficient for three more weeks, and there was not the slightest prospect of improvement The manufacture of Paisley was in articles of luxury, such as shawls; with a few necessaries, such as handkerchiefs, and there was no hope of a beneficial change. The mills were, indeed, working, but for very short time, and at a loss to the owners, who thought it better to suffer this loss rather than close their mills altogether. This fact was a sufficient answer to the assertion, that trade could not be bad, because our exports continued large, Their Lordships knew well why the people had borne their distresses with such patience; they were reduced to such a state that they had no energy. The heads of families died of starvation, caring not what became of their wives and families. Something ought to be done; for it was impossible that the people could see their children dying around them, without feeling most acutely.

Petition laid on the Table.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, *February* 18, 1842.

MINUTES.] Bills 1°. Buildings Regulations; Boroughs Improvement; London and Greenwich Railway; Midland Counties Railway; Kingsclere Inclosure; Birkenhead Improvement; Nottingham Gas (1 and 2); Manchester Infirmary; Severn Navigation; Ashby-de-la-Zouch Road; Hinckley Road; Southwark Improvement (No. 1); Bradford Waterworks.—2°. Municipal Corporations —*Considered*,—Duchy of Cornwall.

Petitions presented. By Mr. Lockhart, from Lanark, for the Amendment of the Prisons (Scotland) Act.—By Mr. Mackinnon, from Mrs. and Miss Chambers, for an Improvement in the Bankrupt Law.—By Mr. Wallace, from Individuals, and Mr. T. Duncombe, from Kidderminster, for Universal Suffrage.—By Mr. Ferrand, from Eccleshall, against the Repeal of the Corn-laws.—By Mr. Wakley, from Southwark, and Mr. Lyall, from Camberwell and other places, for the Redemption of Tolls on the Metropolitan Bridges.—By Mr. T. Duncombe, from Sheen (Staffordshire) for Alteration of the Poor-law.—By an hon. Member, from Larne, and other places in the north of Ireland, to Legalize Marriages by Dissenters.—By Sir John Easthope, Mr. Brotherton, Lord James Stuart, Mr. Hindley, Sir A. Leith Hay, Mr. Wakley, Sir John Hobhouse, Mr. M. Gibson, Sir C. Napier, Mr. Elphinstone, and several other Members, from a great many places for the total Repeal of the Corn-laws.

CRIMINAL LAW—KILLING A GOAT (IRELAND).] Mr. *C. Buller* rose to ask a question of the noble Lord the Secretary for Ireland, which might appear ludicrous at first view, but was not so, as it was connected with the administration of justice. He had seen it stated in the newspapers that at a recent assize in Ireland a man had been sentenced to the punishment of death for killing, not a human being, but a goat. He wished to know whether in Ireland such a penalty existed for such an offence? He did not suppose for a moment that the Government would inflict such a punishment in such a case; but he wished to know what course would be taken, and what punishment this unhappy man would suffer?

Lord *Eliot* believed, that the main fact was correct, as stated by his hon. and learned Friend; but the man was tried, not at the assizes, but at the sessions before an assistant barrister. On the case being proceeded with, it appeared, that an ancient statute, which had not been repealed, inflicted the punishment of death in such a case; there was, therefore, no remedy to the assistant barrister but to pass the sentence. On the case being communicated to the Government, they ordered the instant release of the man, as he had undergone several weeks' imprisonment. He regretted that such an act continued to disgrace the Statute-book, and he might add, that it was the intention of his learned Friend the Solicitor-general for Ireland to bring in a bill to assimilate the criminal law of Ireland with that of this country.

SYRIA.] Sir *Charles Napier* rose to put a question to the right hon. Baronet on a subject on which he felt considerable interest—namely, respecting the condition of the inhabitants of Lebanon. He had seen it stated in the newspapers that Emir Beschir, late ruler of Lebanon, had been sent to Constantinople, and the inhabitants of Lebanon had been placed under the tender mercies of two Pachas, and the forts on the coast garrisoned by Turkish troops. He wished to know whether the Government had received any information on the subject?

Sir *Robert Peel* observed that it would be rather difficult for him to tell what might be the particular course of proceeding by a Government like that of Turkey. He, however, was not in a situation to give the gallant Admiral any particulars. It would be recollected that the object of the late operations of the British force on the coast of Syria was to restore the sovereignty of that country to the Turkish Government. No accounts had arrived from Constantinople since the 20th of January, at which time the Emir had not arrived there. With respect to the other point—the sending two Pachas to govern Lebanon—he was not able to answer. With respect to the government of the forts, all he could say at present was, that the Turkish Government had sent the Seraskier Pacha to Beyrout to inquire into the grievances, both among the Druses and Maronites, and also to consider the best mode of governing the district, but the result of this mission had not yet transpired. He regretted, therefore, that he could not as yet give the desired information to the hon. and gallant Admiral.

Sir *C. Napier* was very much obliged to the right hon. Baronet for calling him gallant Admiral, but that was a mistake, as he had not got that rank yet.

THE LORD PRESIDENT HOPE.] Mr. *Wakley* wished, with the permission of the House, to call its attention to a letter from the late Lord President of the Court of Sessions in Scotland. That learned individual had addressed him in the following terms:—

"*Edinburgh, Feb.* 14, 1842.

"Sir—As you appear to me to act in Parliament quite independently of party feelings, and as I fear that many may draw the same inference which you have done from the motion for the returns moved for by Mr. Maule having been refused (I dare say on good Parliamentary grounds), I am sure that, if a proper opportunity occur, you will be glad to state in the House of Commons, that I have assured you that during the eleven years since the trial of civil causes by jury belonging to the first division of the Court of Session devolved upon me, there have only been three cases, as far as I know, or can now ascertain, in which any other Judge sat or presided for me. With these exceptions, I tried every one of them. In one of those three a possible interest of a very near relation prevented me from sitting. In the other two, casual indisposition, which did not last for three days on either occasion, prevented me. If Mr. Maule's motion had been granted, and if it had included the trials in all of which I presided in August last (for his motion limited the returns to the 31st of July), there would have been only one case in which any other Judge sat for me.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,
"Your most obedient,
"C. HOPE.

"*Thomas Wakley, Esq., M.P.*"

He had great pleasure in reading the letter, and he could assure the House that the part he took in this case was only on public grounds. It would now be seen that this whole case had originated in misapprehension.

Sir *R. Peel* said, he wished to make an observation in reference to this subject. The right hon. Gentleman opposite could probably recollect that he had asked him, on a previous night, whether, during the period when he held office in 1834 and 1835, the Lord President had not signified to him his intention to resign office. He then stated that he had no recollection of such a circumstance, but he had since received a communication from the Lord President, stating that he had never made any such proposal, and that he might therefore have given the most peremptory contradiction to the statement.

Mr. *F. Maule* said what had just fallen from the right hon. Baronet was rather an answer to a question which he had put in debate, than a contradiction of any thing which he had stated. He was as much pleased with that statement as any friend of the Lord President could possibly be, setting at rest, as it did, a report which had been very prevalent in Scotland. No one now was more convinced than himself of the misrepresentation which had taken place, and no one accepted the refutation with greater satisfaction. He was not sorry to hear the letter which had been read by the hon. Member for Finsbury, and in the absence of all official information, whatever *may* be his opinion with reference to the conduct of the retired judge in remaining in office, as he thought, after his powers had failed, he should be the last man either in that House or out of doors to question the integrity of that individual's word, which had never been tarnished. He, therefore, should at once assume the letter of the late Lord President to give the information which the official returns would have afforded. He had no hesitation in stating now, as he had before done, that so far as the late Lord President's actual presence in the Jury Court in Edinburgh was concerned, he had been thus led by wrong information into an error which he sincerely regretted. He was extremely sorry that he had mooted that subject, and he trusted that it would now be set right.

THE FISHERIES.] Captain *Pechell* wished to put a question to the right hon. Baronet at the head of her Majesty's Government. The right hon. Baronet was aware that a convention had been concluded with France, which had for its object the regulation of the fishing trade on the coasts of that country and of Great Britain. Commissioners had been mutually appointed to arrange the disputes which had grown up between the fishermen of the two countries, and to adopt regulations to prevent collision for the future. He wished to know what progress had been made by the commissioners, and also at what period the right hon. Gentleman expected that he should be enabled to bring forward a measure to sanction the regulations that might be agreed on?

Sir *R. Peel* replied, that the gallant Officer had stated correctly that a treaty was concluded in 1839 between this country and France, to regulate the oyster and other fisheries off the coasts of the two countries. The treaty provided that commissioners should be appointed by each side to specify the limits within which the rights of each should be restricted, and to make regulations for carrying the treaty into effect. The commissioners had been appointed. They had met and had agreed upon the regulations; but there had been discussions as to the mode in which the regulations should be carried into effect. But he believed, that the difference was confined to one point, and that was not one of any difficulty; so that he hoped that before the oyster fishing opened in August the whole matter would be settled. The right to the fishing on the part of this country was confined to three miles from low water-mark. But there was a discussion as to the French boats being allowed to come within the three miles, not to fish, but to rest for the night. He repeated that he certainly did hope the matter would be speedily adjusted.

Captain *Pechell* said, an act was passed last year to enable the Privy Council to carry out such regulations as might be agreed upon by treaty between the two countries. Now, he wished to ask the right hon. Baronet, was it his intention to apply for a renewal of that act, which had expired?

Sir *R. Peel* would consider it.

CORN-LAWS—MANCHESTER DECLARATION.] Mr. *Milner Gibson* wished to ask the Chair whether it were convenient to the House for him to present a petition, or rather an address to that House, which he had just received from his constituents in Manchester? Of course it was not for him (Mr. Gibson) to refuse an address from his constituents, and he wished the refusal, if there were to be one, should proceed from that House. He felt it to be his duty to take the earliest opportunity of asking the advice of the Chair on the subject, as the declaration he held in his hand related to the subject which would shortly be under debate. The address was signed by 25,000 persons, inhabitants of the borough of Manchester, and it was to the effect: "We, the undersigned merchants, tradesmen, and working men of Manchester, declare that in loyalty to our Sovereign"—The hon. Member was about to proceed with the reading of the Address, when he was interrupted with cries of "*order.*"

The *Speaker* said, that if the address was in the nature of a petition, the proper time for presenting it would be after the Order of the Day was read for going into committee on the Corn-laws.

Mr. *M. Gibson* said, that the address was not in the nature of a petition, but rather a declaration from the people of Manchester, stating what their feelings were respecting the present Corn Bill of her Majesty's Government.

The *Speaker* said, the House could not receive any declaration that was not in the shape of a petition.

METROPOLITAN ROADS.] Mr. *P. Borthwick* wished to put a question, involving a matter of much importance to the inhabitants of the vicinity of the metropolis, to the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department. It related to the lighting of the approaches to London. Up to a very recent period these approaches had been lighted by means of money collected as tolls. But the present winter, in consequence of the increase of communication by railway, the tolls had so much decreased, that the trustees of the roads could no longer light those roads, and had, in fact, refused to light them. The parishes also had declined to light the roads. The consequence was, that persons passing to and from the metropolis by night were exposed to much danger. He wished then to ask the right hon. Gentleman, had he any measure in contemplation for the purpose of securing the safety of persons travelling by these roads, by compelling the parishes, or some other authorities, to light them?

Sir *James Graham* said, that the various parishes had power by law to make rates for the lighting of the roads, if they should think fit to do so, but the executive had no power to compel them to do so. He had been applied to by some of the inhabitants of the parish of Kensington on the subject, and he had recommended that a vestry-meeting of the rate-payers should be called, and that the propriety of levying a rate for the purpose of lighting the roads should be submitted to them. The vestry meeting was called, and he regretted to say, that a large majority decided against levying any rate for that purpose. It was a question entirely for the decision of the rate-payers of the different parishes, and the executive had no power whatever to interfere in a matter of local taxation for such a purpose.

PRIVILEGE—BELFAST ELECTION—ADJOURNED DEBATE.] The Order of the Day for resuming the adjourned debate on the petition of Baron Ennishowen and Carrickfergus having been read,

The *Speaker* put the question "that the petition being the petition of a Lord of Parliament be not referred to the election committee."

Mr. *C. Wood* said, that, on looking carefully over the act, he had come to the conclusion that the House had no alternative but to refer the petition to the committee; and he had the greater satisfaction in coming to that conclusion, because he felt that the House would attain that object which the right hon. Baronet had declared to be of immense importance—namely, that the House ought not to be called upon to decide on questions connected with contested elections. The right hon. Gentleman had truly stated, that, ever since the passing of the Grenville Act, it had been the policy of the House to leave the determination of questions connected with election petitions to a body resembling a judicial tribunal, rather than to take upon itself to determine the matter. He confessed he could see no reason for refusing to refer this petition to the committee in the usual manner, and he considered that by so doing they would be acting in strict conformity with law and precedent. On looking at the act he could not see on what ground the House could refuse to send this petition to the committee. There could be no doubt but that it was an election petition. The 3d section of the act 4th and 5th Vict. defined what constituted an election petition.

> "Every petition which shall be presented to the House of Commons within such time as shall be limited, complaining of the undue election or return of a Member or Members to serve in Parliament, &c., shall be deemed an election petition."

He apprehended that no person would dispute that this was a petition presented within the limited time, complaining of an undue return. And then came these words—

> "But no election petition shall be received by the House unless at the time it is presented it shall be subscribed by a person claiming therein to have been a candidate at the election."

He apprehended that no one would deny that the petition was, at the time of presentation, signed by a person alleging himself to have been a candidate at the election. If that were the case, then it must be apparent that this came under the definition of an election petition; and he also contended that it had been received by the House. It had been sent to the examiners of recognisances, who had reported the recognisances to be unexceptionable, and he did not know what other act was necessary to constitute the reception of a petition by the House. He would now read to the House the first part of the 30th section:—

> "And be it enacted, that all election petitions which shall be received by the House shall be referred by the House to the general committee of election, for the purpose of choosing a select committee, as hereinafter provided, to try such petition."

It seemed to him that if these points were granted, this came strictly within the definition of an election petition—that it was not included in the exception at the end of the third clause, and that the 30th section rendered it imperative that all election petitions received by the House should be referred to the committee for the purpose of being tried. He apprehended, therefore, that the House had no alternative. The only ground on which this petition could be refused was, that it was signed by a Peer of Parliament. He, however, did not think it was competent to any one now to argue that the petition had not been received. He did not wish to inquire what the decision of the committee might be, whether or not they might make a special report to the House that in consequence of Lord Ennishowen being a Peer they would not go into it; but he apprehended that it was incumbent on the House to refer this petition to the committee.

Mr. *Williams Wynn* quite agreed with the hon. Member for Halifax that this was a question of some nicety and difficulty. As far as related to the petition now before the House it might be of little importance, inasmuch as there were other petitions to which no objection applied containing the same allegation. The fact of this petition being signed by a Peer of Parliament was a decided objection to it being considered by a committee. That objection might be taken in a preliminary manner, and upon that, a committee might determine as they had done in the case of a petition presented by a Member who had been reported to be guilty of bribery, or as in a case where the petitioners were insufficiently described as having a right to vote. The preliminary objection might be taken, and they might refuse to hear it. If this objection were taken before the reception of the petition, he should certainly think it a valid one. He thought the House ought not to receive a petition which upon the face of it purported to be addressed by a person, who, according to his own description, had no right to interfere or address the House upon the matter of an election. But then came the words which the hon. Gentleman had quoted,

> "That every election petition which has been received by the House shall be referred to the general election committee."

He supposed, with the hon. Member, that these words would override the other, and that if the petition had been received the House would be bound to refer it to the committee. The doubt which he entertained was, whether this petition had been received. No order whatever, so far as he was aware, had been made. With respect to the petitions being referred to the examiner of recognisances, the recognisance was not conditional upon the petition being received; on the contrary, it was entered into before the petition was presented. On the recognisance being entered into, no order was made for referring the recognisance to the examiner. It was done as a matter of course. The House therefore had not done any act amounting to the petition being received. It seemed to him the question now to be decided was, whether the petition had been received or not. If it had been received, the House was bound to refer it to the general committee, and that committee might report upon it. If it had not been received, the House had a discretion on the subject, which it ought to exercise, for the petition was signed by a person designating himself by a title which had been inserted in the *Gazette*, from which it appeared that he had been summoned to the House of Parliament. The real question, as he said before, was, whether the petition had been received by the House. If it had, he thought they were bound to refer it to the committee. If not, then he thought the House ought to exercise a discretion on the subject.

Mr. *C. Wood* said, he did not mean to argue that the petition being sent to the Recognisance-office was a proof of its reception. He merely meant to say that everything which was directed to be done until they came to the 30th section had been done. That section declared that all petitions which had been received should be referred, necessarily implying that before reference they must have been received. Everything had been done regularly up to the point of reference.

Sir *G. Grey* said, that on referring to the votes it would be found that an order had been made on the subject of this petition. In the case of the Sunderland election petition he observed that it was ordered to lie on the Table, and that order constituted the reception of the petition.

The *Speaker* said, that all petitions when received by the House were ordered to lie on the Table.

The *Solicitor-general* felt the objection of receiving an election petition signed by a Peer of Parliament, for if he had a right to petition against the election, he had also a right to appear before the election committee, and conduct the case in the inquiry against a Member of that House. That certainly did appear to him (the Solicitor-general) contrary to the resolution of the House of Commons, preventing a Peer of Parliament from interfering with elections. But he did not rise to discuss that point, because he entirely agreed with the view taken by the hon. Member for Halifax. It appeared to him, under the 30th section of the act, to be quite imperative to refer to the general committee all election petitions which had been received by the House. The petition in question had certainly been presented, and he did not quite feel the difficulty suggested by his right hon. Friend as to its having been received. It had been presented to the House last Session, and remained there since, and therefore appeared to come fully within the 30th section, which directed that all petitions that had been received should be referred to the general committee. It would still be for the general committee, or the select committee, to consider the question as a preliminary point; and he (the Solicitor-general) must own that he was glad to come to the conclusion which he had stated, because he was glad of any question relating to election petitions being taken away from the body of the House, and transferred to a committee. He trusted his hon. and learned Friend would not press his motion.

Sir *R. Peel* entirely agreed with his hon. and learned Friend, and with the hon. Gentleman opposite, that the House had no option in the matter. They had received the petition, and the terms of the law were imperative as to its being referred to the general committee. At the same time he was afraid they were only postponing the difficulty, and he thought it would be well both for hon. Members and Members of the general committee to refer to the Act, and consider what would be required in the future stages of the case—whether, for instance, it might not be imperative in the general committee to refer it to a select committee. He felt some doubt whether it would be in the power of the general committee to make a special report on it.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said that the error with regard to this petition had been committed in the first instance by the hon. Member who had taken charge of it. Every Member taking charge of a petition should see whether it contained any thing affecting the privileges of the House, and if it did, make a statement of it before presentation.

Mr. *Thesiger* said, that after the opinions that had been expressed, it was impossible for him to persevere with the motion. But he felt that they were still placed in a situation of great difficulty, for the petition being referred to the general committee, it was doubtful whether they could make a special report upon it, and if they were obliged to refer it to a select committee, it was doubtful whether the select committee would not be obliged to try the merits of the question. At all events, he thought it right that such a petition as this should not appear hereafter to have been referred to the general committee without discussion or objection.

Mr. *Aglionby* trusted it was not to go forth as a decided point of law that a petition could not be received from a person who at the time of the election was entitled to be a candidate. He thought the House was bound to receive this petition.

Mr. *Watson* said, that there were several cases which proved the competency of a committee to try the right of a party to petition. There were eight or ten cases —those of Middlesex, Carmarthen, and others—in which the question had been investigated, and in some instances it was held that the petitioner had not a right to petition.

Motion withdrawn.

CORN-LAWS—WASTAGE.] The Order of the Day for going into Committee on the Corn-laws having been read. On the motion that the Speaker do leave the Chair,

Mr. *F. T. Baring* begged to trouble the House for a few moments, not upon the general question, but to call the attention of the Government to a practical grievance under the present system, which required some remedy. He referred to the fact of their being no allowance for wastage of corn in bond. Hon. gentlemen were aware that when goods were entered an account was taken, and when taken out of bond a further account was taken. In the case of most goods allowance was made, either settled by Act of Parliament or by an order of the Treasury, if they had been kept long enough in bond to cause wastage. But the case of corn had always been held by the Treasury to be under a different law and a different principle, and they had always refused to give the allowance usual in other Customs cases. The relief required here was not one opposed by the revenue officers; on the contrary, the right hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer would find from the papers in his office that the hardship had been represented to the Treasury by the Board of Customs, with a recommendation that a scale of allowance should be adopted. In all cases the Treasury, considering that the Corn-laws depended on quite a different principle from other commercial laws, felt unable to grant any allowance. He trusted the right hon. Gentleman would consider whether some provisions might not be introduced into the present bill to make such allowance as might be found reasonable. The hardship was really very great. In one case a cargo was destroyed, rather than pay the full amount of duty. The new bill went on the principle of making this country independent of foreign nations. If so, and if it were admitted to be absolutely necessary that corn should be imported on some occasions, it was unwise to throw difficulties in the way of persons bonding in this country, and to send them to Rotterdam or elsewhere to store it. It was going directly against the whole principle of our commercial system. If the right hon. Gentleman should not conclude in favour of granting this relief, he would endeavour to frame a clause to remedy a hardship which pressed most severely on many who were caught by the operation of the sliding scale.

Motion agreed to.

Before the House went into Committee, Sir R. Peel rose, and was observing that the grievance to which the right hon. Gentleman referred might just as well happen under a fixed duty as under the sliding scale, when he was interrupted by cries of "Order."

The *Speaker:* I must remind the right hon. Gentleman that the question has been put and agreed to, that I do now leave the Chair.

House in Committee.

Sir *R. Peel* said, he would give the subject introduced by the right hon. Gentleman his consideration, but would not pledge himself with regard to it. He thought the right hon. Gentleman had no right to intimate, as he seemed to do by his last words, that the hardship was owing to the sliding scale. He might contend that under a sliding scale it was more likely to happen, or to a greater extent; but certainly not that it could not occur with a fixed duty.

Mr. *F. T. Baring* was sorry to connect a party question with one of hardship to individuals; but as the right hon. Gentleman referred to it, he could not help observing that the hardship fell peculiarly on those who were, as he said, caught under the operation of the sliding scale, having brought in their corn under one duty, and then being obliged to keep it in bond, for, perhaps, two years, on account of the fluctuation of the scale.

CORN-LAWS—MR. VILLIERS'S MOTION—TOTAL REPEAL.] Mr. *Villiers* rose and said, he wished to read a petition signed by the chairman of a conference, lately held in London, consisting of delegates from all parts of England, Scotland, and Wales. The petition was as follows:—

"To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled.

"The Petition of the undersigned Peter Alfred Taylor, of the City of London,

"Humbly sheweth, that your petitioner was chairman of a conference held at the Crown and Anchor tavern, Strand, on the 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th days of February, 1842, of 720 delegates from all parts of England, Scotland, and Wales, appointed by large numbers of their fellow-subjects, to consider of the total and immediate repeal of the corn and provision laws.

"That the delegates at that meeting were appointed from large towns and extensive districts in which all the principal staple manufactures of the country were carried on—viz. cotton, linen, cloth, hosiery, hardware, cutlery, flax, &c.

"That at that conference the following resolution, expressing a desire to forego all protection for their several manufactures, was unanimously passed:—

"That the deputies present connected with the staple manufactures of the country, whilst they demand the removal of all restrictions upon the importation of corn and provisions, declare their willingness to aid in the abolition of all duties imposed for their own protection.

"That this resolution was not passed without previous thought and deep consideration, the same resolution having been passed at large meetings held in the immediate towns and districts where the several branches of manufacture are extensively in operation, viz., at Manchester, at a meeting of those engaged in the cotton trade of Lancashire; at Leeds, by those engaged in the clothing trade of Yorkshire; at Bath, for the West of England clothing trade; at Derby, for the hosiery and other manufactures of the midland counties; at Birmingham, for the hardware of Staffordshire and Warwickshire; at Sheffield, for cutlery and plated ware; at Dundee, for the flax and linen trade.

"That as all the principal branches of manufacturing industrial employment and capital have thus expressed their desire to give up all legislative protection whatever, your petitioner prays your honourable House that all classes of her Majesty's subjects be placed upon the same footing, and that the trade in corn and provisions be left free and open, as well as in all the productions of manufacturing industry.

"P. A. Taylor."

After reading the petition,

Mr. *Villiers* said, that he trusted that that petition would be considered as no inappropriate introduction to the motion of which he had given notice—a motion also which, whatever had been said with respect to the illogical order in which it was now submitted to the House, was brought forward at a moment that he could only consider as favourable to it, following as it did the discussion in which the greatest ability and ingenuity had been displayed on both sides of the House, in manifesting the evils and difficulties which belonged both to the project proposed by the present Government, and that which was proposed by their predecessors, thus rendering the motion he was about to submit, somewhat in place, for whatever arguments might be urged against it, it was clear of those difficulties and those objections which had been urged against the other measures; he therefore now rose, in pursuance of his notice, to ask the House to condemn *in toto*, and to abolish for ever that law which they were then in committee to consider—a law which had for its avowed purpose to raise the price by limiting the amount of human subsistence—a law which, by the admission of a distinguished Member of the Government, had the effect of raising the price of food, of raising the rate of rent, but not of raising the wages of labour, a law which he must consider, inasmuch as it had those purposes and objects in view, under whatever impression it might have been passed, erroneous if they pleased, or designedly bad as many thought—could only exist in gross and open violation of every principle that ought to regulate the economy and policy of any state, and he would not yet despair of persuading that House of the prudence and importance of abolishing, never to re-enact, such a law. He said he did not despair, because he hailed with hope, as he did with satisfaction, the admission that had been made this year—an admission denied hitherto on the ground that the law was good, that it had worked well, and ought not to be changed. He gladly availed himself of the concession, now made on all sides of the House, that this law had worked ill, that it ought to be changed, and, to use the emphatic language of one of its sternest supporters, the hon. Member for Lincolnshire, that it was a law that had worked well for the purposes only of dishonest men. He (Mr. Villiers) stood then on this ground which they had conceded, and asked them to pause before they again attempted to regulate that which was beyond their reach—and which, if they could attain, their success would be more fatal than their failure. He now implored the supporters of this law to consult their consciences as to the motives, and their experience as to the ends, of all such enactments—and then say, on what it was that they built their hopes, that they could construct, on the ruins of this law which they had now discredited and were ready to abandon, any other such law that would be more durable, or could be more defensible. He asked their attention to the circumstance, that for four centuries the proprietors of the soil had been attempting to legislate for the purpose of giving value to their properties, and that the result of all such efforts had been to prejudice those properties, and greatly to lower their owners in the estimation of the country. He was not unwilling to admit, that at an early period much error and ignorance prevailed amongst them, on the subject, and that they might have believed that they were promoting the general interest by serving their own. But in more recent periods, and since the Crown had been subjected to Parliament, and Parliament possessed by the proprietors of land, they had been labouring with the deliberate purpose of enhancing its value at the expense of the community, and in this century especially had they done so in defiance of the feelings and opinions of the community at large. In 1815, the people of this country perfectly understood the principle of the Corn-law, and ever since, to the present day, they had been suffering from its operation. And were they now about to attempt another experiment on the patience and temper of the people, by which, in the judgment of every thinking man, they were jeopardising far more than the ultimate maintenance of this law. This was not a time when they could perpetrate a wrong in open day with all men's eyes upon them, and with full liberty of thought and expression allowed. Men who had knowledge might perpetrate much wrong upon those who had it not; but, if that was their intention, their folly could not be described in aiding to diffuse knowledge or to promote education. This, however, had been done and the results might already be seen, for without intending any offence to that House, he did not think it fairly represented the intelligence without it. It was not a faithful picture of the information possessed by the middle and working classes. It was the observation of every man who went among these classes, that there was in them a knowledge of public affairs, a shrewdness and an absence of prejudice that never was remarked before. He only mentioned this to show how impossible it was for them to expect that any legislation bearing upon the general interests, could now escape the severest scrutiny, and above all, might they expect it, with regard to this law, which so especially arrested their attention. It was his opinion, that "the people of this country," and he here referred to a sufficiently large number of persons of all classes to justify him in using that title, had determined that this law should not continue. He believed, that the mind of the great majority of the people was made up on the subject; and that they would use every means within their power, and within the law, to emancipate the industry and commerce of the country from this law. They now distinctly demanded of them to relieve themselves of the discredit, and the statute book of the disgrace, of continuing this law; and no longer expose themselves to the charge of a mere vulgar breach of trust, in using the powers confided to them for their own purposes. They had no reason to complain of the temper in which the people now approached them in making this demand. He knew by the time and trouble he had given to the subject, that nothing had been left undone, for a calm consideration of it. They had been asked to consider it in times of comparative quietude—in times of comparative prosperity—they had been asked to do little, they had been asked to act slowly, but every change had been steadily and sternly refused: the smallest modification of the measure had been always refused. Was it wonderful, then, when now exhausted by distress, and perhaps excited by despair, that they should now, in angry tone, demand the total abolition of this law—they had heard much grumbling and complaint, because the ministers of the Gospel and the pastors of the people had lately come forth to proclaim the sufferings of their flocks. He wished, that those who professed to be the friends of the people would think that they could serve them better than by always pecking at their proceedings. Why, what are the people to do? They are not fully and fairly represented in this House? Where, then, were they, with more propriety, to seek for advocates of their wrongs, than amongst those intelligent men who lived among them, and were competent to disclose them; and where could they, with more convenience or expediency, have found them, than among their spiritual advisers. It was because these men had assembled together to discuss the miseries of their people, and counsel how they could relieve them, that they had heard such censure cast upon their conduct. Knowing himself much, and hearing much from others, of the sufferings of the people, he could only see that to admire in their forbearance, and excuse in their violence. He did not, however, stand there only to vindicate the manner in which redress was sought for by the people: he came there to justify the measure of relief itself that they sought: and he was prepared to contend, that that which they demanded was reasonable; that it would produce instant benefit; that it would cause no national evil; that it was unjust to none, and that it ought to be conceded, on every principle of justice and policy and what had he to say to recommend the measure which was the subject of his notice for that evening, but to point to the condition of the country, and the operation of this law. What an anomaly did England present to the world at this moment! Abounding in resources the gifts of nature, and possessing a power more productive for their development than in any other land, yet were her industrious classes so reduced by want and distress, that he who was appointed by the Government to answer the message of the Crown stated, upon the responsibility of that Government, that whatever might be said of that distress, it could not be exaggerated; and what is there else as generally admitted, why, that England, rich in the gifts of nature, rich in knowledge, rich in the skill, the habits, and disposition of her people, yet limited in extent, and her people hourly increasing, wants food, that she has reached the point long foreseen, when she must procure her food from other lands; that her food is now scarce—becoming scarcer, and that in want of its ready and regular supply, her people are daily sinking in the scale of comfort and well-being;

and yet, is there a man who has been found so false and so foolish as to proclaim this as the necessary condition of this country. Is there any man so ignorant who could view a chart of this Globe, and see this island placed between the two great civilized continents of the world, and not ask if it were possible that England so in want, could receive no relief from neighbours so placed, whether England had nothing of her own to offer in exchange for what she wanted; and would not such a man, if he heard that those continents stood in great need of what England produced, and who yearly suffered from not finding vent for their surplus food, would he not, in wonder, ask for some solution of this mystery; and is there any that could be rendered, save this, that the rulers of this country who are owners of its soil, place a barrier to the commerce of the world, in what they produce, for the purpose of enhancing the value of their properties, and notify by their law, that no man shall find a market for food in England, on which he can rely, for what is necessary to support her people; and that the trade in food, thus impeded, the greatest distress followed, which nothing could relieve, but causing that trade to be free. That, then, was his theory of the present anomalous condition of England, if they disputed it, let them show, then, that he was not right? Let them try it by every test, and show him, if they could, that he was wrong? Let him be only supposed to be right, and he would ask, if there was a single feature in the present distress of the country that they would not expect to find. What would they expect under those circumstances? Would it be that the high price of food compelled men to forego the comforts and superfluities of life—would it be that those whose means of living was in producing those comforts were deprived of employment. Would it be that in want of food and from no regular commerce in it abroad, we should in our necessity be compelled to send out bullion that we wanted at home to buy up at great cost the food of other men, and thus by contracting the basis of our credit, embarrass and limit still further the trade at home. Should we expect to find other countries become makers of their own manufactures, condemned by the refusal of their surplus food, to withhold their custom from ourselves and perchance become our rivals? Should we expect as resulting from these causes to find general discontent and disaffection among our industrious people? If this would be the condition in which they would expect to find the country, if it were under the circumstances he had described, which of these things do not exist at this moment, and are not the constant and common subject of remark, and he then called upon Gentlemen opposite who maintain the law, and who admitted such to be the condition of this country, to explain by what means these effects have been produced, if not by the cause he had assigned. He ventured to affirm that this was the cause, and that the want of food and the want of regular trade in it was the chief cause of all the distress that was now admitted to exist, and as it had ever been the case in this country, he rejoiced to observe that now the good sense and sagacity of the people were prevailing on the subject. In spite of every effort made to mislead and delude the people, though the ground had been trailed in every direction by rubbish of every kind, yet had it been unsuccessful in diverting them from the real scent which they were now pursuing. Gratifying had been the indications of the influence of public opinion in this respect within one year. Two Governments successively had acknowledged the imperative necessity of dealing with the question. They had one Government which thought it of so much importance, and attached so much weight to the opinion generally entertained, and the evils that resulted from it, that they were ready to sacrifice office for it; and now they had another Government, which thought proper to admit that which hitherto it had denied, that the law now existing must be changed. This was now to be done, notwithstanding all that had been said in favour of the law. They had now then, before the country two projects with a view of changing the law and mitigating its evils. He objected to both—He did not deny that the plan of the noble Lord would have mitigated the prominent evils of the present law, and he believed that much improvement would have followed had the plan been adopted. But, he contended that both were unjust—that there was no justice in either principle—and that there was no ground whatever for the maintenance of any Corn-law. The people were said to be unreasonable for condemning both, but he was there to defend their claim upon the principle of justice, and he knew of no teacher of morals, no writer on ethics, that justified any mode of wrong. The law was right or wrong in principle. If it were wrong, why should it be maintained? That was the objection which the people took to the plan of the noble Lord. It became more objectionable from the manner in which the plan before the House was recommended to them. It would be found that the present law was justified by the plan proposed by the noble Lord. It was said that the plan of the noble Lord was unjust, and he, therefore, had no right to complain of the injustice of others. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Dorchester seemed so to view it, and, in addressing himself to the argument, he said that he was cured of giving large measures of justice. His line of defence was this: "If I am an unjust man you are another." The right hon. Baronet indeed defended the injustice upon expediency, having as he said learnt by experience not to dole out too much justice at a time. When or where the right hon. Baronet acquired this experience he did not know, but he should like to know when the people, having received a full measure remained discontented—might not the right hon. Baronet have mistaken a large measure for a perfect one, and might not the discontent which he speaks of arise from its having been large in principle and promise, yet defective and incomplete in execution. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth seemed to think that nothing more was required to vindicate his own plan than to expose the difficulties of that of the noble Lord; while he disposed of the claim which this motion preferred by a sort of passing allusion to the party by whom it was represented in that House. He described them as a small party whom he believed to exist, who held extreme opinions, and might probably be violent in the expression of them. This was the way the right hon. Baronet treated the claims of millions in this country to have this law repealed. The small and violent party, however, had this consolation, that they only received in this respect the treatment which every party had ever done that first advanced the remedy or reform of any abuse. It is in this way that the advocates of all those great measures which England has most reason to be proud of have been treated in this House; they had only then to persevere in the course they had hitherto pursued, and notwithstanding the right hon. Baronet's charge of violence and unreasonableness. [Sir R. Peel denied this statement.] He, Mr. Villiers, was happy to hear the right hon. Gentleman disavow this view of his motion—it was one, however, made from both sides of that House; he did not confine it to the party opposite, and he did not doubt that the charge would be again repeated in debate. And here he should just like to ask those Gentlemen whether they considered that there was any thing more unreasonable in asking for the repeal of this law than in refusing for many years past to enquire into its operation, and now admit that it had worked ill. Was there any thing more violent he would ask in its immediate repeal than its immediate enactment. Did they ever hear any of that cautious phraseology at the time of passing the law which they hear now in vindication of this minimum of concession. They were invited here to be careful in dealing with the vast interests at stake, they were told of the vast capital in question, of the social interests dependent upon the landed interests, but when this law was enacted, or since it has been in operation, when has a syllable been said or heeded about the lives, the comforts, the well-being, the industry, and the capital of the millions of this country, who are, and have been also cruelly affected by this law? The people resisted its enactment, and have ever since complained of its operation, but it has been without regard to their manifold interests maintained in force against them; and to this day there was nothing urged in defence of the law that might not with equal reason be advanced in favour of any abuse, or any monopoly, the sum of which is, that it has existed, and therefore must continue, urged, indeed, with little grace to a people who had been for thirty years crying out for its repeal. The arguments are, indeed, a mockery of the people. There are thousands on the eve of starving; and was this the moment to talk of the interests that were vested in such a law? Was it time to talk of proceeding with all deference for the rich when the poor have by means of the unreasonable tenacity of this law been driven to the last extremity? To give a pretence to such reasoning they ought to have begun their modifications long since: they have had ample warning, and they have resisted all solicitation; the people have neither time nor temper for delay, they are starving, and relief they must have. There is no wrong that might not be defended upon the grounds on which the wretched concession that is now offered is justified. They had seen, a short time since, an account of a captain of a Turkish vessel who had inveigled a number of passengers to sail with him, on the assurance that they would find a requisite supply of provisions and water on board; but when they were out at sea, he monopolised the water, and would only suffer those to drink who could pay the price he chose to extort. Why there is not a Conservative phrase used by the right hon. Baronet in defence of this law, that might not with equal reason have been used by this captain in defence of his monopoly; and it would have been just as much in point in reply to the people who had engaged to be supplied, and who were dying of thirst, that great interests were invested in the supply of water; that great expense had been incurred in fitting out the vessel, and that the navigation of those seas were attended with great hazard; it would, he said, have been just as much in place, and as consistent with justice, as what they had heard in defence of the Corn-laws. The question was, whether they had any right to pass the law at all, and whether it had not become too disastrous to be endured any longer. His answer to that was, that the law is atrociously unjust, and that the evils it is hourly producing are past endurance, and that there is ample authority to shew that no evil to the nation, and even advantage to the landed interest, would follow from its instant repeal. He knew that there were honest and disinterested men who detested this law, but who had scruples about its total repeal, fearing the immediate consequence to the country, of such a step; such persons, perhaps, were not very fully represented in this House: but their opinions required deference and should be considered. They asked if a total repeal of this law might not be prejudicial to agriculture; and whether the landlords did not bear, exclusively, a large portion of the national burdens? These were matters to be considered no doubt; but those who claimed a total repeal had not overlooked them, nor were they without the highest authority in declaring that this claim for the Corn-law rested upon no solid ground whatever. Who was the first man that he could name in support of his view? It was one of the most eminent statesmen of his day, a man remarkable for his sagacity, his talent, and his character, he meant Lord Grenville. How does he view the Corn-laws? in the first place, he declares it to be a bounty to the grower of corn, and thereby a tax on the consumer, and then what says he as to the policy of such a tax: he says,

> "The great practical rule of leaving all commerce unfettered applied more peculiarly, and on still stronger grounds of justice as well as policy, to the corn trade than to any other; and irresistible, indeed, must be the necessity which could authorise the legislature to tamper with the sustenance of the people, and to impede the free purchase of that article on which depends the existence of so large a portion of the community."

This then is the opinion of the greatest statesman of his day when such a law was first proposed; five years after that time, what is the opinion of the commercial classes upon this and all similar laws as declared by the leading merchants of London, assembled in their Guildhall?—Why they denounce in strong terms, and call in the interest of commerce and of the community for the repeal of all protective duties, whether for land or manufactures. In 1821, however, we have the authority of this House itself against the system. The landlords, deceived by the promise of their own law, enquire themselves into the causes of agricultural depression, and the real sources from which they may expect its future prosperity. And what do we find in a deliberate report of a committee of landowners? Why a contrast presented between two periods, one of which commenced with the beginning of the last century and continued till 1773, in which legislation of every kind was attempted to raise the value of agricultural produce, and the other, where the trade in grain was almost free, and which lasted till 1791. Let the House hear the extract from this report, and then say whether they can doubt of the opinion of this committee in favour of free trade. The report of the committee was this:—

> "Your committee cannot look at these contrasted circumstances coincident during the first period with a comparative stagnation of our agriculture, and during the second with its most rapid growth and improvement, without acknowledging that there was nothing in the system pursued up to 1773, which necessarily promoted this most essential branch of public industry and national wealth; and also that there is nothing incompatible with the success of both these objects in the system which has practically prevailed since that date."

Again, the committee say,

"That they may entertain a doubt whether the only solid foundation of the flourishing state of agriculture is not laid in abstaining as much as possible from interference, either by protection or prohibition, with the application of capital in any branch of industry. Whether all fears for the decline of agriculture, either from temporary vicissitudes, to which all speculations are liable, or from the extension of other pursuits of general industry, are not in a great degree imaginary. Whether commerce can expand, manufactures thrive, and great public works be undertaken, without furnishing to the skill and labour which the capitals thus employed put in motion, increased means of paying for the productions of the land? Whether the principal part of those productions which contribute to the gratification of the wants and desires of the different classes of the community must not necessarily be drawn from our own soil, the demand increasing with the population, as the population must increase with the riches of the country? Whether a great part of the same capital which is employed in supporting the industry connected with manufactures and commerce, does not, passing by a very rapid course into the hands of the occupier of the soil, serve also as capital for the encouragement of agriculture. Whether in our own country, in former times, agriculture has not languished from the want of such a stimulus; and whether, in those countries, the proprietors of the land are not themselves poor, and the people wretched in proportion, as, from want of capital, their labour is more exclusively confined to raising from their own soil the means of their own scanty subsistence."

This was a committee, composed of shrewd landowners, carefully considering their own interests. But they had also at this day, in favour of the abolition of all protecting duties, some of the greatest proprietors of land in the country—men of great intelligence and experience—men who had devoted much attention to agriculture—and they needed no protection, or saw no danger in its abolition. He might mention among them such men as Lord Spencer, Lord Fitzwilliam, Lord Radnor, and Lord Leicester, who repudiated altogether the justice or necessity of protection as an advantage to their properties. Where was it that skill and economy in husbandry was most displayed? Why, in Scotland; and there was not a public meeting, there was no demonstration against the Corn-laws, in which some occupier of land was not ready to declare that his interests were directly opposed to the Corn-law. For the last ten years this had been the case. They always supported their speeches by facts. The same opinions were expressed in a committee of the House of Commons in 1836 by farmers. In consequence of the part he took on this question he had received many letters on the subject, and from none had he received letters in which there was more bitterness of language against the Corn-law than from farmers themselves. He had here also some works on the subject by country gentlemen, who, when they committed their thoughts to paper, were well worth consulting. He had lately read a pamphlet published by one who was not unknown to the right hon. Baronet the Member for Dorchester; it was written by a person of great experience in agriculture, and who described himself as "A Cumberland Landowner." He believed the right hon. Gentleman was acquainted with the author, who invited the attention of the landed interest to his opinions.

Sir *J. Graham* was understood to say it was not his work.

Mr. *Villiers* did not mean to say that the right hon. Gentleman was the author, but that he knew him, and knew him to be what he represented himself to be, in the following passage, (p. 69) namely,—

"One of their own body; one, who has no ambition to gratify, no purpose of the day to serve; but attached to the interest of that yeomanry, which he knows to be the pride and the strength of this great nation, he feels the love of truth predominant in his heart; and well satisfied of the grounds of the assertion herein developed, he boldly affirms. that a free trade in foreign corn is the real interest of the landowner, and the only safe policy of the state."

Again, after detailing the mischiefs to be expected from restrictions on trade, he says,—

"On the other hand, what have we to fear from the open competition of free trade? Nature and art have fitted up our native land with the means for carrying on production and barter beyond any other nation in the world; while its civil institutions, and the spirit of its people, are every way qualified to bear out these great advantages. Look at our roads, our canals, our docks, and our public works; arms of the sea traversed by bridges; hills, and even rivers, undermined by tunnels; our steam-boats covering every navigable water. Then consider our natural advantages—our sea-girt islands, intersected by mighty rivers worthy of a continent; our meadows fertilized by living streams; our verdant pastures; our climate favourable to the growth of corn; our sheep and cattle on a thousand hills. Look at our smiling land, where nature has been prodigal, and where art has supplied what nature has refused; then say whether we need fear competition with any foreign state; whether we have not the start of a century in the career of commercial rivalry; and whether, with open ports and trade unfettered, the half cultivated sands of Poland, or even the vine-clad hills of France, need excite the envy or the fears of Great Britain—of Britain, the seat of wealth, of freedom, and of arts."

Again,—(p. 63)

"The prosperity of the home trade, and the advancement of British agriculture, has always been soundest and most rapid when our foreign trade has been most prosperous and free. Give the industry of Britain only a fair and open field, and it has nothing whatever to dread from foreign rivalship."

Again,—(p. 61)

"What have the landed interest of England to fear, either politically as a body, or in reference to the retention of their incomes, from the utmost prosperity of commerce that can possibly arise? The whole soil is theirs; and the more prosperous our towns are, the more must the rent-rolls of the landowners increase."

Again—(p. 62)

"We hear a great deal about emigration, the increase of the commission of crime, &c. &c., and the inability of our shipping and manufacturing interests to enter into free competition with foreigners. Give to the people profitable employment, and a price of provisions at home more equalized with prices abroad, and all these complaints will at once vanish like a mist before the morning sun. No wonder that we have an overstock of manufactured goods, when the operatives, to gain the most limited livelihood, are compelled to work from fourteen to sixteen hours in each working day. Equalize the prices between corn and wages, and these men would immediately cease to labour so excessively; the overstock of the market would disappear, a greater ability to purchase would ensue, and a rapid rise of prices would at once show how destructive the influence of Corn-laws has been."

But he would now turn to another publication* by an intelligent landowner in Surrey, known to many Members in this House.

"I am the owner of a tract of land, which probably contains a larger portion of poor land, as compared with the good, than most other landowners in this county; yet I am confident, that not an acre would be rendered useless by the opening of the ports for the introduction of foreign corn: and it has been repeatedly shewn, that every acre of land which it was possible to cultivate with profit last year (when wheat was at 55*s.* 6*d.*, rye 31*s.*, barley 33*s.* oats 22*s.*), might continue to be so cultivated, were every restriction and prohibition abolished, and the public allowed to purchase their corn in the cheapest markets. But such a reduction of price, as would not be sufficient to cause even the very poorest lands now under corn to be laid down to pasture, would so increase the comfort of the labourer, and give such an immense stimulus to industry in general, that the progress of the country in wealth would be accelerated in a degree that can hardly be conceived. The more the landlords contend that corn would be cheap if the ports were open, the more they prove what a nuisance the present Corn-laws are."

Referring to the interests of the farmer, he says,—(p. 36)

"I again repeat, that until the ports are open, no farmer, who knows his own interest, will bind himself by a lease: if he does, he ought to take it at a corn rent, that is, with a lease fluctuating with the price of corn: if he does not do this, he puts his fortune, and the independence of himself and children, at the mercy of his landlord, or of the Bank Directors, or of the Government."

And he concludes his able and argumentative work by the following summary, which he declares he has proved, namely,—(p. 37)

"1. That the landowners' monopoly of corn is the heaviest tax which the people have to pay.

"2. That the landowners, and their families, are the only persons who gain by this tax.

"3. That all other classes, including farmers, are injured by this tax.

"4. That of all taxes, it is the one which presses hardest upon the labourers.

"5. That the gain to the landlord from this tax is not so great as the loss to the people."

"It follows that the immediate abolition of the monopoly of corn which the landlords now enjoy under the present Corn-laws, is a measure of bare justice and absolute necessity."

Again, he would ask the House to hear the latest opinion of a landowner, who formerly represented the district of which he (Mr. Villiers) sat, whose whole income was derived from land, and whose estate was not dependent on a manufacturing neighbourhood, I mean Mr. Whitmore.*—(p. 11.)

"The present law, without conferring any real benefit on our own agriculturists, does infinite mischief to the rest of the community; so the change, without any injury to the former, would do infinite good to the latter."

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* Pamphlet entitled "Cheap Corn best for Farmers, proved in a letter to George Holme Sumner, Esq. late M.P. for the County of Surrey, by one of his Constituents."

* Letter to the Agriculturists of the County of Salop, by W. W. Whitmore, Esq.

> "I am inclined to believe that a free trade in corn would not admit of any considerable quantity of wheat being sold in our markets under from 45*s*. to 48*s*."—(p. 7.)

> "Taking these circumstances into consideration, I cannot entertain any apprehension of the slightest ill-effect to our own agriculture by the change. I believe we shall consume easily all the corn we can grow, and all we can import; but, I believe also, we should want more of meat, and of beer too—matters of immense moment to the graziers, the breeders of stock, and the barley growers of this country; and who, amongst the agriculturists, will not come under one or other of these descriptions."—(p. 7.)
>
> A larger consumption, and consequently a greater demand, for every species of grass produce, in a fresh or uncured state, such as milk, butter, meat, &c. is the necessary consequence of a population at once increasing and well employed. The large proportion which grass land bears to arable, in every densely peopled district, cannot fail to have struck every observant agriculturist."—(p. 10.)

> "I can, from my own experience, assert that, even now, the laying down land of every quality, including the very best to permanent pasture is a profitable application of it."—(p. 10.)

He could quote many other authorities to the same effect among agriculturists who had most considered the subject, and still more from writers who were not connected with the interest in question; but he knew that these were not popular authorities, more especially if they deserved the title of political economists. He would therefore, content himself with two only because they were men whom the right hon. Baronet looked upon as authorities for some of his positions, and that he was in the habit of quoting them in the House. He meant Mr. M'Culloch, and Mr. Tooke. He would not quote Mr. M'Culloch for all his opinions, but he would quote him for the reasons which the right hon. Baronet had assigned when he last quoted him, namely, as

> "One of the most intelligent and able advocates of free trade; one who takes a dispassionate and able view of the case, looks at it calmly, reasons upon it closely, a clever and able man,"

and because he (Mr. Villiers) was told that his motion was unreasonable, and that the calm and clever man had given his opinion upon its object. It was as follows:

> "The truth is, that the agriculturists have nothing to fear even from the total and unconditional repeal of the Corn-laws. It admits of demonstration, that it could then do no real injury. It would not throw an acre of land out of cultivation, nor sensibly affect rent. The prosperity of the agriculturist does not depend upon the miserable resource of custom house regulation. Though there were swept away, the excellence of our soil, the skill of our husbandmen, the wealth of our commercial and manufacturing classes, will ensure the continued property of agriculture. Those who investigate the matter will find, that the existing regulations respecting the corn trade are little less injurious to the agriculturists than to the other classes."

Such were the opinions of Mr. M'Culloch, who, he was informed, was a landowner as well as an author. He should now refer to Mr. Tooke, the able and experienced writer on this subject; and whom the right hon. Baronet delighted to quote. What said Mr. Tooke about total repeal? He quoted from his work published in 1840:—(pp. 43, 44.)

> "Although, however, there is every reason, founded on the experience of that period, (1834-5), and on other grounds which it is not here the place to enter upon, that at a range of prices of about 45*s*. for wheat there would be no just cause for apprehending any diminution of the breadth of arable land, unless the land were to become, as I believe, it will with the growth of population become, applicable to more valuable productions than corn; it would form no valid reason for perpetuating on the country the infliction of the Corn-laws. At the same time, if it could be fairly shown, that the growing lands of this country, constituting any considerable proportion of those destined for the supply of food for the community, could not be continued under cultivation, except at prices much higher than those of the foreign grower, such difference might be a ground for rendering the transition more gradual; and the degree or extent of difference should serve as a guide for determining the gradations by which that difference should be reduced. But from all the information which I have been able to collect, not omitting that which the agricultural reports of 1833 and 1836 by the Committees on agricultural distress of the House of Commons, and of 1836 by the Committee of the House of Lords, are calculated to afford, I am firmly persuaded, that the difference is very inconsiderable, so inconsiderable as not to form a valid objection to a very early resort to the only system which can hold out the prospect of security, to farmers in their leases, to landlords in their incomes, and to the public in having their supply of food divested of an impost which is felt grievously by the consumer (not to mention the other grievances attending it), while it adds little, if at all, to the permanent income of the producer."

And now, having Mr. Tooke's book in his hand, he would just finish a passage which the right hon. Baronet quoted the other night, to show the danger of depending upon foreign countries, and which the House would see was written, not exactly for that purpose, but to show the policy of free-trade. Mr. Tooke said,—

> "No one can be more alive than I am to the circumstance, that within certain degrees of longitude and latitude, extending over the central parts of the continent of Europe, there is, in the majority of seasons, a prevalence of weather of the same general character, of propitiousness or unpropitiousness, to the growth and gathering of the corn crops, as prevails in this country. But this circumstance, instead of being an argument, as by some persons it has been set up to be, against a free-trade in corn, is the strongest ground in favour of it. An extension of the radius of our habitual supply to the north and south-east of Europe, to parts of Asia bordering on the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, to Egypt, and, above all, to the United States of America, would greatly mitigate the effects of visitations of peculiar inclemency of weather prevailing simultaneously in this country, and within a certain range on the continent of Europe."

So much, then, for the opinion of theoretical writers? But did they differ from the practical men who were deemed of most weight in this House, when they gave it as their opinion that little land would go out of cultivation, and none out of use, while the trade in food was free; and in estimating the price of wheat at between 40*s*. and 48*s*. per quarter, if restrictions were removed. What was the evidence given before committees in 1836. He would read the opinions expressed by one or two. Mr. Bennett, a land-agent and farmer, is asked:—

> "Do you think, with reduction of rent, and the reduction of prices, the farmer can cultivate his land at a profit?—Looking to the seven years back, and having taken those farms under very low prices, I have not a question that some may do it profitably, and I have no doubt some will.
>
> "Sir James Graham: At what price do you estimate wheat for the next seven years?—If I was going to take a farm myself, I should not expect, nor would I calculate for the next seven years, to have wheat above 5s. to 6s. a bushel.
>
> "Will the Duke of Bedford's tenants, who have re-taken those farms, be able to pay the rent for which they have just agreed, with wheat at 5s. a bushel?—I think they will. I think the majority do not expect to see it at much more."

He adduced evidence of this sort to show, that there was nothing violent or dangerous in the propositions of those who advocated a total repeal of the Corn-laws. He would trouble the House with another extract:—

> "Mr. Robertson: Supposing that mutton had borne the same proportionate price when wheat fell to 40*s*., do you think the Scotch farmer would then have been enabled to make a good living?—The Scotch farmer would have tried something else than wheat; he would have extended his grass cultivation.
>
> "And if the price of barley had been also reduced?—Those are all regulated by the demand of the manufacturing and commercial classes."

Thus, then, they had the evidence of statesmen, of landed proprietors, of theoretical writers, and of farmers, to prove that there was no real danger to be apprehended to the country from a repeal of the Corn-laws. This was the case that he had in the first place to make out, in support of his motion for free-trade. They next had to consider the other ground on which this law was rested,—namely, that the landowners bore exclusive burdens, and that the Corn-laws were maintained as compensation. Now, the first evidence he should adduce on this point was, that which could not be disputed,—namely, the admission of the landowners themselves; and here he would remind the House of what the right hon. Baronet the Member for Dorchester had said on this point, for he looked upon that right hon. Gentleman as the personification of protection, and more trusted, perhaps, than any other, by country gentlemen. He heard the right hon. Gentleman make a speech on the Malt-tax, in which he referred to the Corn-laws, and he there stated, that that tax was the only *locus standi* that the landed interest had for the Corn-laws. He had just referred to the debate, and he found him correctly reported, for the right hon. Gentleman went on to state, that he, for one, should consider, that if the Malt-tax was repealed, the tithes commuted, the Poor-law reformed, a portion of the county rates thrown upon the consolidated fund, that then a total repeal of the Corn-laws would be irresistibly proposed to the House. Now, then, he would not go into the question of the Malt-tax upon this occasion, further than just to call to mind the enormous injustice to the community, of imposing the Corn-tax, to indemnify the landlords for the Malt-tax, which, if removed, they think that some of their lands might be more profitably employed? Why, did any body dispute for a moment that the community paid more for beer on account of the Malt-tax? And could greater injustice be imagined, than to compel them to pay more for bread to indemnify the landowners for what they suffered for the Malt-tax? Why, what was to indemnify the community for the two taxes—on their beer, and on their bread? But, now, what had actually occurred with respect to those other charges, which, if they were mitigated, the right hon. Baronet thinks that the total repeal would be irresistibly proposed to the House. Why, the Poor-law has been reformed in the manner most beneficial to the landowner—a great portion of the county-rate has been cast on the consolidated fund, and tithes have been commuted for rent-charge? Why, then, according to the right hon. Baronet's own doctrine, there remains but the Malt-tax, when he ought himself to vote for the total repeal of the Corn-laws? And does any man suppose, that the community would not gladly submit to the charge of four and a-half millions a-year, the amount of the Malt-tax, to get rid of the incubus of the Corn-law, acting, as it does, with a tenfold pressure upon all their means and energies. But, was there ever such a pretext for a great national burthen as these local charges which were named, such as county-rate, highway-rate, &c. Why, they are for local purposes, and are locally beneficial to the proprietors and occupiers themselves. What would be the value of land without highways, how could they bring their produce to market, or bring back manure to restore the land without them. Surely, the right hon. Baronet, the Member for Tamworth, must have suffered the notion to have escaped him without consideration? He said, the bread of the whole nation ought to be taxed, to relieve landowners from the highway-rate? Why, what would be thought of a tax upon landowners, to indemnify people who live in towns from the payment of borough-rates, and poor-rates, and police-rates, and yet, why are they to have these to pay for themselves and the bread-tax besides, to indemnify the landowners from paying what equally belongs to them. Again, the county-rate is not an exclusive burden. He had heard that the town that he sat for pays 1,200*l.* a year towards that rate. What is to indemnify them for this charge, as well as for the tax on their food? Again, the tithe which is now nearly all commuted for rent charge, so as to leave it little or no grievance to the cultivator, such as he was subject to formerly, in having a tenth of his gross produce taken, and thus often preventing improvements being made. But what can be more rude than such an indemnity for such a charge when we have no certain account rendered of the amount of the land that is tithe free, or of the proportion of the tithes belonging to the landowners themselves. I am informed, that one half of the land of the United Kingdom is tithe free, and one-fourth of the tithes, at the least, are in lay hands. But the better way of testing it, as it rested upon a ground of justice, is whether any landed proprietor could show any claim to compensation in any court of justice; whether he could say that the repeal of the Corn-laws, would injure him by means of rent charge for which the tithe is commuted and which varies with the prices of produce; whether he could say that he did not take or buy his land subject to the charge, or whether his land was not tithe free. Again, if the Corn-laws are as compensation for their local charges, why do we not hear whether they are justly proportioned? Why is not the amount of these charges, and the advantage of the Corn-laws placed side by side in a regular account, so that the public may be satisfied that they are not paying more than they need? Why, we know it is because the Corn-laws are a burden to the public, out of all proportion to those alleged on the ground of these local charges; and they knew, that during the last twelve years, though great reductions had taken place in the local charges, none had been made in the Corn-laws, and that they had on the contrary become more oppressive than ever. Where is the justice, then, of what was called protection? Is it claimed on any other ground?—we ought to hear it, if it is. He trusted that this question of protection would be well sifted,—what did it mean? Is it to support an interest by law when it cannot support itself? and if so, can it be universally done; and if not, how can it be just? Is it fair or right to protect land and not to protect labour; and who ever thinks of protecting the artisan or mechanic against the improvements of machinery: and yet, is there any difference between preventing the public having access to fertile soil for cheap and abundant food, to uphold the fortunes of landlords, and preventing the community from deriving the advantage of the steam-engine, to keep and to rear a class of mechanics whose labour would be superseded by the adoption of this power. In opening, a short time since, the Travels of Humboldt, I found a circumstance mentioned that would illustrate the absurdity of this claim to protection. He refers to a class of men who had earned their living, for nearly two centuries, by carrying passengers on their backs, in baskets, over the Andes, but whose occupation ceased when the government made regular roads for passing the country. Why these men were up in arms immediately with the government for thus encroaching upon their interests and prayed for protection against good roads, and in favour of the baskets. But is there anything more absurd or monstrous in the claim to protect the bad clay soil of this country against the wants and well-being of the whole people who could be provided by access to good and better land, than this claim on behalf of bad roads and baskets. But is there any other ground on which this claim can be rested. They might be prepared for anything after what fell from the right hon. Baronet the Member for Kent, the other night, and we perhaps might hear that landowners paid more towards the general taxation than other people, and that on this account the tax on food was just; but here let me read the case embodied in a petition to this House, from a labouring man, who complained of the proportion of his scanty pay which was taken for the revenue. Then let it be judged if the landowners paid a greater proportion of his income to the state than the poor man, the case was of William Blaxland, of Birmingham, and it stated, that he then used weekly two ounces of tea, two ounces of coffee, eight ounces of sugar, three pounds eight ounces of meat, seven pounds of flour, seven pints of ale, a quarter of a pint of brandy, and one ounce of tobacco: the cost of which, freed from tithe, corn customs, and excise duties, would be 2*s*. 4⅜*d*. But with these taxes these articles cost him 7*s*. 7½*d*., being a weekly tax of 5*s*. 3⅜*d*., amounting in the year to 13*l*. 13*s*. 6*d*. And we know that the average rate of wages in this county is under 11*s*. a week. He mentioned this case, that people after connecting it with the known fact that the customs and excise yielded more than 75 per cent. to the revenue, they might judge with what justice landowners alleged the undue weight upon themselves of the general taxation as an excuse for Corn-laws. What, then, is it but a purely arbitrary act, resting upon nothing but the particular interests of those who profit by it at the expense of the community. It was said to be a question only between landowners and manufacturers, but in truth it was a case between the owner of the soil and every other consumer in the community, a question, in fact, between the interest of about 30,000 persons, in raising the value of about fourteen million of acres of arable land, and every other interest almost that could be named. This was not merely a manufacturing question. What the interest of the manufacturers in the question was, it would be easy to state: he loses a good customer at home, by the means of his customer being exhausted by paying too much for food; and he loses a profitable customer abroad by not being allowed to exchange his goods for grain; but the manufacturer had no interest in lowering the price of food in order to reduce wages; if that was his interest, in order to get labour cheap, he could not be better off than at present, for wages were never so low, as it is proverbially the case whenever food is dear, owing to the numbers who must, on that account, lose their employment. With respect to its being a farmer's question, he did not believe that there was one landowner whom he was now addressing who honestly believed that they the farmers had any real interest in it, and if it was only for this reason he would say they could not believe it, namely, that they knew that if ever they had a farm to let, they had twenty farmers offering to take it, and how could they with such competition among themselves avoid offering the highest rent, or be able to get more than the average rate of profit for their own capital, and how could it be an advantage to them to pay more instead of less for the use of the land. High prices could be no object to them, for that required a greater outlay, and if they had to pay more for seed, more for servants, more for horses, more for poors' rates, they would require only larger capital to engage in farming, which, though it might tempt men with insufficient capital into that business, or exclude men of small capital from it, could never be the means of procuring a higher rate of profit. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Tamworth had said once it was a labourer's question, and doubtless it was so; he had always thought it peculiarly so, more so than of any other class, and fortunate it was indeed for those who maintained this law that the labourers did not see it as clearly as others saw it for them. In this country, where capital is abundant, and demand for labour naturally great, the general condition of the labourer must depend upon the sacrifice he must make to obtain food. Why was a labourer in the United States so much better off than he was in England? Because he felt in the first place no difficulty of getting food, and capital being abundant, and a wide field existing for its employment, his labour was in demand; but why was food plentiful in America, because by little labour it could be procured owing to the access to good land, but it is not the extent of territory or the mere unoccupied soil that gave the facility, it was, that by little labour a man could raise it, and that is precisely what would be his case in England if he was allowed free trade with grain growing countries. A man by devoting his labour to manufacture to exchange for food might obtain it as easily as by occupying new land and tilling it himself. Why, let any man test this by the case of an island rising up in the channel that we could appropriate, can any body doubt that if our labourers could occupy it, or if it was inhabited by men who wanted clothes and had an excess of food, that our population would be much under the circumstances of those in the United States if they could freely exchange with them; and would not the man whose labour was in request, and who paid little for his food be in a condition either to toil moderately or to possess himself of the comforts or luxuries of life; but let the labouring man have to make great sacrifices for food, or be unable to exchange freely what he produced for food, and he asked if any condition could be found lower. It was said, however, that the repeal of the Corn-laws, by throwing land out of cultivation would deprive labourers of employment, and in order to exaggerate the evils of such a result, it was stated as if every quarter that was imported from abroad would displace a quarter grown at home, and indeed some went so far as to suppose that so much would be imported, that vast tracts of land would be thrown out of cultivation; but what was the most that the most sanguine repealer expected to come in under a free system of trade? why hardly more than four millions. Now there was no reason why this should displace so much at home: in the first place, the deficiency of the supply for the now wheat-consuming population is nearly two millions, but the calculation is that one-third of our population do not eat wheaten bread owing to the price, and which, if lowered, or the people's condition improved, would greatly increase the consumption. How, then, was the land to be deteriorated in this country, seeing that our arable soil did not amount to more than 14,000,000 of acres, and grew about 2,000,000 of quarters of wheat, how could the addition of 4,000,000 from abroad, giving, at the same time, a great stimulus to manufactures and commerce, and thus improve the consuming power of a population and income, and demand for land, cause such deterioration in its value? Why is not the bare contemplation of the land losing its value in this small island, with a dense and industrious population, full of resource, adding to its numbers every hour, positively ludicrous? He should like to hear the plan which the most ingenious man could devise for keeping down rent, if the commerce and industry continued productive. He really believed the only way in which it could be effected, would be by some such means as the right hon. Baronet's scale, which, in its anti-social and anti-commercial operation, may have the effect of driving capital and skill out of the country, which, as it is the source from which land derives its value, so, by its loss might it also sink, aggravated by the burdens consequent on maintaining an unoccupied people: but suffering the energy and enterprise of this people to have full scope, who can, from necessity, be so fortunately circumstanced as those who own the soil of the country, and yet for what are they jeopardising all this? What are they placing in hazard all the institutions so favourable to themselves, losing the esteem of their fellow-countrymen, making all men politicians, and driving the middle and working classes to think they were misrepresented and defrauded, and that the present system was maintained simply for the benefit of a class? Why, it seemed all for the vain hope of giving value to their estates by artificial means, which natural circumstances would give them in a tenfold degree. The only ground on which they could rest for keeping their bad land in cultivation—namely, that it gave employment to the poor, is no argument for the Corn-law; it is only a reason why some provision should be made for the existing generation of poor who are so dependent; for to keep for ever these bad lands in cultivation, is for ever to rear a class of men with interests adverse to the community, and so, indeed, with the occupiers of the land, a generation of whom may have come into existence since the last Corn-law was passed, that would have otherwise occupied themselves, or who would have employed their land differently, but for the continuance of this law. The continuance of the monastic institutions might have been urged; and, doubtless, was upon the same ground as the Corn-laws—namely, that they provided for the poor, but this was, of course, unheeded, though it was, he believed, the origin of our public provision for the poor. But, at all events, if greater consideration of an interest, affected by an improvement, is required in one case more than in another, it is no ground for the continuance of the bad law or the bad system, though it may, possibly, be for compensation, or for some special provision which the transition might require. But, he contended, that there was no such case here with respect to the poor, for the poor were not provided with employment under the Corn-law in the agricultural districts; it has been shewn, in the analysis of the last census, that but for the town and the manufacturing districts, 350,000 people would have been left in the agricultural market, who could not have been supported, and who would have dragged down the rest to the lowest level. He would now no longer exhaust the House, and must leave to his many friends on this question to supply what he had omitted in developing the case to the House He had attempted to show, that under the present circumstances of this country, there could be no advantage, and was no pretext for the Corn-laws. That there is now a deficient supply of food for this country, and that the people have the means, but for the law, of procuring an ample supply, but obstructed by the law, they are suffering the severest privations; commerce is impeded, employment is withheld, and that, identified as our revenue is with the ability to consume, that this is yearly declining, and for such reasons he begged to move, that the duties on corn do now cease and determine. When he said, "now," he meant to mark the coincidence of his opinions with the petitioners to this House, and who prayed to be instantly relieved from the operation of these laws, though, of course, if it could be shewn that the public would suffer in any way from the immediate removal of restrictive duties, they were neither so foolish or so bigotted as still to insist upon that taking place, or if it could be shewn that more good could be derived from their gradual than their immediate abolition, would they reject that benefit; but, at this time, and considering the unreasonable attitude assumed by those who profit by this law, he thought the people quite right to call for their total and immediate abolition, and unless any clear, certain, and definite evil could be pointed out as resulting from it, he hoped that those who were for the total abolition, would not shrink from supporting his motion on this occasion.

Mr. *Oswald* said, he was not in the habit of often addressing the House, it having always occurred to him that whatever he was likely to say would, in all probability, be better said by some other hon. Member; in short, the feeling that he had neither the power to instruct nor amuse the House had hitherto kept him silent. The great importance of the subject now before the committee was his apology for now breaking the rule he had hitherto prescribed for himself; and, in offering himself to the indulgence of the House, he did not rise to make a speech; in point of fact, if he had had such an intention, the very luminous and able address of the hon. Member who had just sat down would have rendered it unnecessary. He rose merely for the purpose of recording his opinion against the new and improved sliding scale of the right hon. Baronet, against the present Corn-law, and against all laws which fetter and impede the free importation of grain, or any other article of food. It appeared to him that the present Corn-laws, as well as the improved plan of the right hon. Baronet, aimed at what was beyond human power; to regulate by legislative enactment the price of corn, appeared to him to be impossible. All attempts hitherto made for that purpose had failed, and he believed that the plan of the right hon. Gentleman, improved as it was, would also fail. But supposing he had the power of fixing a point below which the price of corn was not to be permitted to fall, they had no right, he maintained, to make such an enactment. On such a point he did not think it necessary to go into detailed discussion; he stood on the broad principle that no one class had the right of placing a burden on all the other classes of the community for their own aggrandizement. He held any such proceeding to be altogether unjust; and its injustice was only equal to its impolicy.

It amounted to a monopoly, which he would describe to be the robbing of the many for the purpose of benefitting the few. Of course the parties thus robbed must become less capable of benefitting themselves, or the other classes of the community, than they would have been if they had not been treated with injustice; but the evil did not rest there. It appeared to him, that any party who attempted thus to gain undue advantages could not in the long run succeed. He believed that all the Acts passed with regard to corn had resulted in disappointment, and the plan of the right hon. Baronet would have the same fate. It would grievously disappoint the landowners, while it would continue to inflict great evils on the mercantile and manufacturing interests of the country. He had heard many landed proprietors regret the extent to which the manufactures of this country had arrived, and express their belief that the people of Great Britain enjoyed more comfort and happiness before the extension of our mercantile and manufacturing system. He believed those individuals were sincere in what they stated, but they drew their conclusions from false premises, and in total ignorance of the facts. The question was, not whether this country was to become a great commercial nation, but whether, being the greatest commercial and manufacturing nation of the world, we should be enabled to hold our ground. It was impossible for us to stand still. We must either increase and improve, or retreat and retrograde; and it was wholly unnecessary for him to state to the House what would be the effects to this country of any retrograde motion. The evils it would inflict on all classes of society would be too dreadful even for contemplation. There was one argument which had been brought forward by the right hon. Baronet in favour of his plan, and indeed it was urged in favour of all plans of protection to the landed interest—namely, that we should be independent of other nations for our supply of food. He could not see how any great commercial and manufacturing country could be to any great extent independent of other countries. Indeed, he could not conceive of any nation being independent of others but a nation of savages. Perhaps he might be told that it would be a great injustice to withdraw the protection enjoyed by agriculture while manufacturers kept their protection. He entirely concurred in the justice of that remark; and he was ready, and he believed the most enlightened manufacturers in the country were ready, with the repeal of the Corn-laws, to concur in the repeal of all laws that restricted the free exportation and importation of manufactures. His opinion was, that the agriculture, the commerce, and manufactures of this country had flourished, not in consequence of our restrictive system, but in spite of it, and the more freedom was given to trade the more would they continue to prosper. He was, therefore, for doing away with the whole of these restrictions; and, whatever difficulties surrounded the question, he had no hesitation in saying that the interests of all classes demanded that the trade in corn should be as free as the air we breathe.

Lord *Mahon* said, that the hon. Member who had brought forward this motion, had introduced it by reading at length a petition from the Anti-Corn-law Delegates, and in the course of his speech had more than once triumphantly alluded to the petitions which had been presented in favour of his views. Undoubtedly, considering the earnestness with which the prayers of the petitioners were addressed to that House, as well as the number of signatures attached to them, they were entitled to all consideration; but at the same time, the House ought not altogether to forget the undue means under which, in many instances, these signatures had been obtained. He had seen one penny and half-penny pamphlets designed for general circulation amongst the lower classes, in which every term of insult and invective was levelled against all those who sought no more than to maintain that principle of protection for agriculture which the legislature had many times confirmed. These strongly tended to exasperate the feelings of the people—to raise master against man, town against land, and the lower classes against the higher. So much for those who could read, but even to those who had not yet attained that pitch of learning, means of excitement had kindly been supplied. Prints had been resorted to for the same purpose, and one, for example, had been circulated in the manufacturing districts, representing a Pole, or a Russian, offering corn to the starving manufacturers of this country, while some fiery-looking soldiers were seen to interfere, some driving off the Russians with their bayonets, and others cutting down the manufacturers with their sabres. Now, he asked, whether it was not probable that, under the influence of the excitement so produced, the signatures should be very considerably increased? But that was not argument. It was only agitation, and as he respected many of the arguments which had been brought forward on the other side, though he differed from them, so on the other hand, he condemned and abhorred an agitation which did not use reason for its means, nor he believed had justice for its object. The question had been thus stated to the people, whether the price of corn should be high or low, wages remaining as they were. Accordingly, at contested elections—especially at the election of the noble Lord, the Member for the City of London, a small loaf and a large loaf had been carried round, and it had been asked of the people, as if that were the only practical question on which they had to decide, whether they chose a large loaf or a small loaf for their money. That was not the question. The question was, whether the people should have moderate wages with moderate prices, or low wages with low prices. If any thing like fairness had been intended by the emblems he had just named, the right course would have been to nail two shillings under the small loaf, and one shilling under the large loaf, and then asked the people whether they would sooner have two shillings a-day wages, and dear bread, and one shilling a-day wages, and cheap bread. That, he contended, was the only practical choice before them. On this point, he was entirely at issue with the hon. Mover. In support of his opinion, he would quote some testimony from the ranks of his opponents. His first witness should be an hon. gentleman who had been some years a Member of that House, and who had always voted against the Corn-laws —he alluded to Mr. G. F. Young. That gentleman stated at a public meeting at Whitechapel, held some time ago, that when in Parliament he had voted with Mr. Hume upon the Corn-laws, but he added these words:—

> "He had lately travelled extensively in the north, and conversed with master manufacturers on the subject, 19-20ths of whom had said that they looked forward to the repeal of the Corn-laws as a means of reducing the price of labour. He could solemnly assure the meeting that while the repeal of that law would entail an injury on agriculturists, it would by no means render the good to the working classes with which certain persons were deluding them."

Another Gentleman sitting on the opposite benches, one of the Members for Birmingham, had written a letter, dated October 13, 1840, which had been lately published, and from which he would read the following extract:—

> "The editor of the *Anti-Corn-law Circular* makes woeful blunders. He forgets that a repeal of the Corn-laws, unaccompanied with any other measures, would necessarily reduce wages to the continental level, and make them lower in proportion to the price of corn than they now are; for it is vain to talk of the bare repeal of the Corn-laws relieving the manufacturing poor. Why, the professed object of the repeal is to enable the merchant to compete with the foreigner; and how can he do that unless by a reduction of wages?—which reduction will be upon all trade, home and foreign. If men would look upon those things as matters of business, they would not make such blunders."

As his third witness, he would call a Peer and a landowner. But hon. Gentlemen opposite would have no cause to complain of the selection when he named Earl Fitzwilliam. He was, of course, far from assenting to all that that noble Lord had said on the subject of the Corn-laws at different periods, but would treat him as the hon. Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Villiers) said, that he treated Mr. M'Culloch, and quote the noble Lord for what he wanted of him. The noble Lord, being then Lord Milton, spoke as follows in a debate upon the Corn-laws*:—

> "He could bear witness from his own personal experience to the severe distresses of the labourers in husbandry, to whom the cheapness of corn (so much wished for by those who argued on the other side) was a disadvantage, because that very circumstance threw them out of work."

An Hon. Member on the Opposition side of the House, "At what time?"

Lord *Mahon:* On the 3rd of March, 1815. [*"Hear, hear, hear," from the Opposition.*] Hon. Members cheered, but he would observe, that he did not bring forward Lord Fitzwilliam's words as any taunt of inconsistency; after twenty-seven years there would be little value in such a taunt; but if Lord Fitzwilliam bore witness to the state of agricultural labourers as a fact from his own knowledge, that fact was valuable and would not be altered by any subsequent change in his opinions. When he (Lord Mahon) had a few years ago been travelling on the continent, he had made enquiries as to the effect of the price of corn on the price of labour. He had taken as a standard by which to test the principle for which the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Villiers) contended, two cities—Warsaw and Amsterdam. In Warsaw the price of corn was generally low. The average price was scarcely more than 22*s*. per quarter. And what then had been the condition of the people? He had understood them to be in a state of utter destitution—starving in the midst of the corn which they grew for others' consumption. At Amsterdam, on the contrary, the price was generally high. The average there amounted, according to his information, to 58*s*. or 60*s*. And what was the condition of the lower orders of Amsterdam? They were comfortably fed, they were comfortably clothed, and their children enjoyed the inestimable benefits of a sound moral and religious education. These examples proved, he thought, that the hon. Member could not be right in his opinion, that in a country so thickly peopled as England, where the excess of labour always drove down the price to the minimum rate, that the amount of the wages of the labourer was entirely independent of the price of grain. But this was only one of the many reasons for which he supported a legislative protection to native industry on corn. One of the principal objects which the Legislature of any people ought to have was, to render them independent of foreign supply for the food upon which they lived. He did not say, that this object could in every case be fully attained; but the supply of foreign corn should be supplemental and subsidiary, not regular and constant. He had been surprised at the arguments which had been used on this subject by the two noble Lords, the late Secretaries for the Colonies and Foreign Affairs. The former noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) had said, "that as they were dependent upon the foreign grower for their supply of raw material,—for their cotton for example, there could be no reason why they should strive to render themselves independent upon him for their supply of corn." Now this was an argument which he could not understand. Surely, that dependence on foreign countries for our raw material could only be considered as a drawback and a disadvantage; and if it were a drawback and a disadvantage, why should we endeavour to inflict it upon ourselves? If, from various circumstances we were dependent for foreign supplies in the article of cotton, why should we, under entirely different circumstances, render ourselves dependent also in the article of corn? Surely, then this argument of the noble Lord tended in a contrary direction from that which he designed. The other noble Lord, to whom he had alluded (Lord Palmerston) had drawn an eloquent picture of the effects of the sliding scale. He had called it "childish," and in impassioned language, had denounced it as a "miserable" contrivance to check the commerce between the zones, bar the intercourse betwixt man and man. Now, he could not reconcile such opinions—opinions going directly against all protection—with the vote which the noble Lord was prepared to give during the last Session, in favour of a fixed duty of 8*s*. The eloquence of the noble Lord, his passionate invective, his finely-painted picture, would have applied as appropriately to, would have weighed as strongly against one measure of protection as another,—against a fixed duty as forcibly as against a sliding scale. Between those measures the only point of difference was a question of degree. But he (Lord Mahon) found it still more difficult to reconcile those opinions of the noble Lord with former parts of his political career. A new Member, having attentively listened to the powerful appeal of the noble Lord, might have left the House the other night, with a strong conviction on his mind of the absurdity, of the "childishness," as the noble Lord had termed it, of the present system, and with feelings of virtuous indignation against those who had proposed it. Perhaps that same man, desirous to know who were the legislators against whom that indignation should be levelled might refer to the *Annual Register*, to see by whom the hateful measure had been brought forward; and what would he then find? That the measure had been proposed by the Duke of Wellington's Cabinet in 1828; and how great would be his surprise; how he would distrust his senses; how incredulously he would rub his eyes, when he discovered, in the list of that Cabinet, the name of Viscount Palmerston, Secretary at War. But the new Member, who was unacquainted with the career of the noble Lord, would still, at any rate, suppose, that he must have immediately flung down his office in disgust: and again would he refer to the Register. And he would then find, that the measure had been proposed by the united Cabinet in March, 1828, and that Viscount Palmerston's retirement had been some weeks later, on a question of an entirely different nature. The question of freedom from foreign supply concerned them very nearly. There had been within the present century two periods, at which a dependence on foreign countries for a supply of food would have been all but fatal to the honour and independence both of England and of France. The first to which he alluded, was the time of that formidable confederacy amongst European nations to which England had been exposed, when she most dreaded, and when she had most cause to dread, the universal sway of Bonaparte. What, he asked, would this country have done if at that period of her history she had been dependent for the food of her people upon France, or any country of Europe in close alliance with France? Even the courage and unanimity displayed amongst us while Bonaparte lay encamped at Boulogne; and never was there greater courage, never greater unanimity, though they would no doubt have afforded us a triumphant issue to the conflict, had the enemy crossed over to our shores, must yet in that case have yielded to the lingering agonies of famine. The second instance to which he had alluded, was of that great neighbouring power which had then been opposed to us. It would be remembered, that two years ago, the government of France had found themselves opposed to the principal powers of Europe in the settlement of the Eastern question. Supposing that the statesman who then swayed the destinies of France had continued to do so, and that it had been found impossible to reconcile differences with other countries, or to soothe the feelings of his own,—if she had then been dependent upon any of those countries with whom she disagreed for her supply of corn, would she have been in a condition to have supported her opinions, whether true or false, on that he expressed no opinion—with a true regard to her honour and dignity? The importance of relying mainly on ourselves for supplies of daily food is no mere modern feeling; it prevailed even in ancient times; it prevailed even among provinces of the same great empire, when exposed to uncertainty and separated by wide intervals of sea. Some words upon this subject in the great historian of the Cæsars were so striking, and so applicable, that he (Lord Mahon) was assured the House would allow their recital. *At hercule nemo refert quod Italia opis externae indiget, et quod vita populi Romani per incerta maris et tempestatum quotidie volvitur.* But even laying aside the dangers of war and political changes, he asserted in opposition to the hon. Mover that a free trade in corn would by no means ensure a cheap and constant supply. That trade would gradually adapt itself and limit itself to the place from whence it could be carried on at least cost—as for instance, the shores of the Euxine—and those very districts might suddenly become unable to yield us any supply. On this part of the question he had been struck by some statements in a recent work of travels. Odessa, and other parts of Russia, were lately visited by Mr. Slade, an intelligent gentleman. He devoted particular attention to the state of the corn-trade, and what was the result of his inquiries in the case, whether, if the Corn-laws were repealed, and we should become dependent on the Russian dominions for bread, there might not be other events besides war and political changes, to deprive us of our expected or accustomed supplies of food? It was this:—"That South Russia is liable to famine from various causes. In 1823 locusts destroyed the crops in Bessarabia and part of the Crimea, and the government was obliged to succour the inhabitants. In 1834 a period of terrible drought destroyed every particle of vegetation throughout Southern Russia. The peasants unthatched their roofs to feed their cattle, and sometimes even attempted to take that wretched food for themselves. One-fifth of the Tartar population in the Crimea, and nearly all the cattle, are alleged to have perished of hunger. The order of trade was reversed, so that in 1834 cargoes of bonded wheat were sent back from England to Odessa. Now, if England by the abolition of her Corn-laws were always dependent on others for half the amount of the corn necessary for her consumption, a similar disaster in Russia would react on her. The result might be dreadful distress; for if superior cheapness of production gave Russia in the first instance the monopoly of supply in England, it is not probable that either Germany or Austria would be prepared suddenly to supply a great deficiency." But it was not merely those extreme ports, which, in case of free importation, might affect our markets, but other intermediate countries might be disposed, by the prices of England, to part with their own harvests, and subsist on inferior grain from Russia.

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* See Hansard, vol. xxix. p. 1221.

Let them take the case of Tuscany. On that point, let the House consider the official report of the hon. Member for Bolton (Dr, Bowring), lately presented to Parliament. According to that hon. Member's calculation, the average price of wheat at Leghorn, in 1826, was only 28*s.* per Winchester quarter. The price afterwards rose and fluctuated. In 1835, however, the average price was 31*s.* per quarter. The hon. Member said, there could be no doubt, if a free trade in corn was established, that it would lead to a great extension of her commercial relations with Tuscany. He praised the corn as of exceedingly fine quality, and the granaries as excellent, and added these words:—

> "Were a demand to take place, her own produce would, in consequence of its superiority, be exported, and the Tuscan population would be fed by corn imported from the Euxine, as is the usual state of things when shipments are made at Tuscany for foreign countries."

There, then, was a large supply of excellent wheat selling at Leghorn, at an average price of 31*s.*, in the last year of which accounts were given; and how with a free-trade—how, even with a low fixed duty, affording encouragement to speculations in grain—could the British farmer successfully compete with that supply? The calculations of Dr. Bowring were corroborated by those of Mr. Aubin one of our diplomatic agents, who in a despatch laid upon the table, only two days ago, stated that the result of a regular trade in corn, would be to double or triple the quantity of cultivation throughont the Papal States. He would admit, however, and he thought it was a strong argument in favour of an alteration of the law at the present time, that the remunerating price of wheat had been gradually falling from the peace up to the present time. A gentleman well known by his opinions on free-trade Sir H. Parnell contended, thirty years ago, that the proper remunerating price to the farmer was about 100*s.* the quarter. In a speech delivered in that House on the 15th of June, 1813, Sir Henry observed:—

> "The sum of 105*s.* the quarter has appeared to many persons to be too high a price. But if the great change in the value of money which has taken place of late years was thoroughly examined by them, they would find reason for not persevering in their opinion. No one can say, that 105*s.* is a scarcity price."

Other persons less celebrated for their advocacy of free trade than Sir Henry Parnell, did not however go his length, but still at that time the remunerating price to the farmer was not put below 80*s.* a quarter. In the Act of 1815 it was estimated at only 70*s.* And when in 1827, Mr. Canning came to deal with the Corn-laws, 60*s.* was laid down as the fair price, which sum was adopted by the Duke of Wellington, and was according to the opinion of the leading agriculturists of the country. Thus, for example, on the 31st of March, 1828, Sir Thomas Gooch said:—

> "The bill of last year (Mr. Canning's) held out that 60*s.* a-quarter was a fair remunerating price. He (Sir Thomas) agreed that it was."

Thus, from 1815, the remunerating price had fallen from 70*s.*, and now 56*s* was found to be fair, according to the judgment of those best acquainted with the subject. This fact though not hitherto noticed in these debates, formed, he thought, the great foundation for the argument in favour of the present proposed change in the Corn-laws. From these results it appeared to him that the farmer might now be satisfied with less remuneration than formerly, and hence a protection, which was only sufficient in 1815, or in 1828, would be disproportionate at this time. The fact of the remunerating price having hitherto been steadily on the decline appeared to him undoubted, by whatever cause that fact might be explained, whether by the alteration of the currency, whether by the amount of capital applied in the improvement of land, whether by both these causes combined. It might also be shown that in like manner the prices of transit had diminished. Some gentlemen adverting to former times had talked of 8*s.* or 10*s.* the quarter. But on this point he could not do better than refer to a statement which was made by Mr. G. Sanders, at a debate of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, on the 19th of March, 1841. That gentleman said:—

> "Mr. Pearson has stated, that the transit of foreign corn would be about 10*s.* a-quarter. One fact is worth a dozen assertions. I have myself imported wheat from the continental ports to Hull, at a rate of fare varying from 3*s.* to 4*s.* per quarter, which is, in fact, less than the cost of conveying grain from the east to the west coast, and the freight from Ireland to London is greater than the cost of conveyance from the continental ports."

Upon all these grounds, then, he came to the conclusion, that protection to the agriculturists was indispensably necessary, but he also came to the conclusion, that for the benefit of all classes concerned, even for the farmers, who, he thought, suffered, instead of gained, by higher rates of duty than were required for their protection, a reduction might be made in the higher and unnecessary duties. The scale which had been proposed by his right hon. Friend would, in his opinion, be adequate for its purpose, though certainly not more than adequate, and he hoped that it would be received by all parties as a measure of conciliation. It was better for the agricultural interests to have a less amount of protection with general acquiescence and consent, than to struggle for a higher amount, and gain it only by hard conflict. With regard to the manufacturing classes, he was disposed to think, from what he had heard, that this measure would be received with satisfaction, and be regarded as a settlement of the question. He trusted, that they would see, that the agricultural classes were willing to meet them in a spirit of conciliation. And as for those who looked merely to their own advantage, he trusted, that they would be impressed with the emphatic words of Mr. Curran, who said, "he had known agitation and disturbance make many a rich man poor, but had never known them make a poor man rich." He did not mean to say that the hon. Member for Wolverhampton might not still please himself with annual motions in that House, that occasional meetings might not still be held or that itinerant lecturers might not still be hired; but it was not by things such as these that they would make any progress in public opinion. They had had annual motions in that House, for the introduction of vote by ballot, and they had had motions for the expulsion of the Bishops from the House of Lords, but this he would say, without any disrespect to hon. Members opposite, who, he had no doubt, conscientiously advocated those objects, that the public mind upon those questions must very greatly change from what it was at the present time, before there was the slightest practical danger of the removal of the Bishops, or the introduction of the Ballot-box. And thus it would also be with respect to the Corn-laws. He, therefore, looked to the present measure as a settlement of this question; and if the Government succeeded, he thought they would have achieved a task, of which the difficulties could only be felt by those who had closely looked into the subject, and would, in a very high degree, have earned the grateful feeling of the country, and deserved the power which was intrusted to their hands.

Mr. *Elphinstone* was desirous of directing the attention of the committee to the claim which had been set up on the part of the landowners to impose, under the name of protection, a tax on the other classes of the community, with the view of raising the rentals of their estates. The only just ground on which this claim could be made was, that the landed interest were liable to taxes or burdens from which the other members of the community were exempt. The imposts which were usually referred to were the poor rate, highway rate, county rate, and land tax. Now, with regard to the poor rate and county rate, it was well known to the committee that all property beneficially occupied was liable to those rates without any exception; so that the landowner only paid in proportion to the value of his property. With regard to highway rates, the landowner had no more right to charge the public for the highways in the country, than the inhabitants of towns would have to tax the inhabitants of the country; in point of fact, very large sums were laid out by the inhabitants of towns in repairing and making their own streets. He would refer to the accounts of a parish in which many of the Members of the House resided—St. George's, Hanover-square. He found, that during the last year rates to the amount of 37,000*l.* had been levied, of which 12,000*l.* was laid out in the support of the poor of the parish, and the remainder (25,000*l.*) paid for the police and county rate, and placed for the advantage of the inhabitants of Middlesex under the disposal of the county justices. With regard to land-tax, he was astonished at the effrontery of the landowners in bringing forward this claim. When the land-tax was originally imposed, it was imposed in lieu of subsidies to suit the convenience of the landowners, at the rate of from 1*s.* to 4*s.* in the pound, or one-fifth of the rental. When the land-tax was first imposed the rental of the country was about ten millions, consequently the land-tax was about two millions; but when the landowners found out that the rental was likely to increase in consequence of the extension of trade and commerce, they persuaded Parliament to make the amount permanent. The rental has now risen to forty millions. If the tax were now levied on the same terms on which it was originally imposed, it would have now amounted to eight millions per annum. So that on the subject of the land-tax the land-owners have contrived to prevent six millions from going to the State. With regard to the legacy duty, the case was much worse. On the death of any person possessing personal property, a heavy tax was levied; but in the case of real property no such tax was imposed. It was calculated that if the devisal of real property was taxed in the same way as that of personal, a sum of one million per annum might be raised. He had also looked through the taxes which had been repealed since 1815, on matters relating to agriculture, and to which other members of society were still subject; he would read the paper to the House.

Taxes from which the Agricultural Class have been relieved since 1815; *other Classes of the Community being still liable to analogous Imposts.*

A. D.		Per Annum.
1816.	Horses used by farmers at rents under £200	£150,119
	Do. do. £50	60,461
	Do. do. 20	59,186
	Servants in husbandry	5,835
1819.	Mares for breeding	3,593
	Employed in husbandry	470,108
	Servants in husbandry, occasionally used as domestic servants	34,374
1823.	Reduction of duty on horses	4,044
	Taxed carts at a low duty	9,340
	Sheep dogs	6,876
1824.	Horses drawing taxed carts	11,324
	House and window-tax on houses occupied by farm-servants, relieved	6,866
	Servants, reduction of duty	5,076
	Taxed carts, duty relieved	20,695
1825.	Horses occasionally let to hire	5,637
1833.	Stewards, bailiffs, &c.	10,110
1834.	Windows in farm houses	35,000
	Horses ridden by farmers, at £500	10,000
	Do. bailiffs	4,000
	Dogs (shepherds')	3,000
	Fire insurance on farming stock	50,000
	Total	£965,634

The amount is 965,634*l.* per annum, so that the loss by the three items (legacy, land-tax, and repealed duties) amounts to eight millions per annum. There were various other exemptions, such as auction duties on the sale of farming stock, duties on draining tiles, &c. If, however, there should be any small item which had escaped notice, pressing upon the agricultural classes, it must be amply compensated for by the protection afforded by the cost of conveyance—the freight and other charges could not be less than 7*s.* per quarter on wheat—so that allowing three quarters per acre to be the average growth, you would have a protection of 1*l.* 1*s.* on every acre of wheat-growing land. One of the great disadvantages of a tax on wheat is, that it acts as a poll-tax, and falls with greater severity on the poor man than on the rich. To take the case of an agricultural labourer in the county of Hertford, whose wages were about 26*l.* per annum; an agricultural labourer, with a wife and four children, would probably consume a 4lb loaf for his daily bread. Now the price of a 4lb. loaf is about 9*d.* in this country, and 6*d.* on the continent, so that 3*d.* is paid as tax by this poor labourer every day, or 4*l.* 11*s.* 3*d.* in the year, a sum amounting to 17 per cent. on his income. Now, the rich landowner, with 1,000*l.* or 10,000*l.* per annum, could not consume more bread, and the tax of 4*l.* 11*s.* 3*d.* would bear no proportion to his income. The noble Lord, the Member for Hertford, had fallen into a great error on the subject of wages; wages do not depend on the price of provisions in any country, but on the supply of labour and demand for employment. Ireland and America were good examples of this. In Ireland, where provisions were dear, wages were at the lowest sum at which it was possible to maintain life. It was in evidence before the commissioners appointed to enquire into the state of the hand-loom weavers, that persons in the north of Ireland had been glad to feed on the refuse starch from the manufactories. Now, in America, where provisions were cheap, labour was high. And why? because capital could find profitable employment—the industrious workman was certain of being profitably employed. He believed the right hon. Baronet the Member for Dorchester, had admitted, that wheat in ordinary years could be landed in this country at 40*s.* per quarter, so that according to the statement of the right hon.

Gentleman, every shilling of price by which wheat exceeded this sum must be a tax on the public. The average price of wheat having been 57*s*. for the last five years, it would follow that every person who ate bread in this country had paid an annual tax of 17*s*. And assuming the annual consumption to be twenty-five millions of quarters, no less a sum than 22,000,000*l*. had been paid by the consumer for his bread, instead of being expended in other articles, either of luxury or comfort; but the money loss is the least of the evils inflicted by the Corn-laws—the chief evil is, that it cramps the energies of our manufacturers and capitalists, and compels the corn-growing countries in Europe and America to become manufacturers themselves, and to become our rivals in neutral markets. It was in evidence that in markets where we were formerly without a rival, we were met by the manufactures of Switzerland, Germany and Belgium; and the evidence that had been given before the committee on import duties had been fully borne out by the statistics of our exports. In 1829 we exported to Russia 13,000,000 yards of printed cottons and calicoes, and 18,000,000 lbs. of cotton twist; in 1833, only 2,500,000 yards of calicoes, and 19,000,000 lbs. of cotton twist—cotton twist being the material from which calicoes are made, these facts shew that the Russians are beginning to make their own calicoes. In 1820 we exported to Holland and Belgium 14,000,000 yards of calico, and 200,000 lbs. of twist; in 1833 24,000,000 yards of calico, and 11,000,000 lbs. of twist. Thus, by persisting in our Corn-laws, we were raising up rival manufacturers in all parts of the world which we had hitherto supplied. Every page of the report of the committee on Import Duties contained evidence to the same effect. Manufacturers from Birmingham, Sheffield, Leeds, Bradford, Newcastle, Manchester, Stockport, all told the same lamentable tale. He would quote the words of Mr. Ibbotson, a manufacturer at Sheffield:—

> "Five-eighths of Sheffield trade went to America—there was an amount of suffering in Sheffield of which people had no idea. America had abundance of corn, we had abundance of steel; but we could not barter the one for the other. The scissor trade was nearly annihilated—the iron trade with America was annihilated—in the saw-mill trade we were cut out. We send steel to America to make saws; but what could we do?"

The right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth had quoted certain figures, relating to our exports, in his speech on the Corn-laws. He read a very different lesson from those facts than the right hon. Baronet. They proved that while our exports increased in quantity, they deteriorated in quality, or that the character of our manufactures were changing; that we were now exporting the half-manufactured articles, instead of the completely manufactured articles — thus increasing the skill and enterprise of the foreigner instead of the Englishman. The official value, it was well known to the committee, meant the *quantity*—now our exports in 1833 were, according to the *official* value, 69,000,000*l*., while their *real* value was only 39,000,000*l*. In 1840, official value, 102,000,000*l*.; real value, 51,000,000*l*.; that is to say, there had been an increase in value of 12,000,000*l*., and in quantity, of 33,000,000*l*. So that for the same quantity of goods in 1840 you obtained 7,000,000*l*. less than in 1833. The irregularity of the corn trade was also a great disadvantage. Corn is now only imported in case of a bad harvest, so that in addition to the misfortune of scarcity, you add to your distress by having to export bullion to purchase it with, and thus disarrange all the monetary transactions of the country. If there were a regular trade in corn, you would no more have to export bullion to purchase it, than you now have to export bullion to purchase hemp or tallow in the Baltic ports. The noble Lord who had preceded him had talked of the advantage of being independent of foreign supply. He thought the great object ought to be to have a steady and uniform price, and to be independent of climate and the seasons. It was evident the larger range of country you take the more likely was your supply to be unaffected by the weather. He saw no other means of relieving the poverty and distress which unhappily were so prevalent in the country, but by a total repeal of the laws on the importation of food. England was pre-eminent in science, literature, and art—unrivalled in the energy of her capitalists, and the skill and enterprise of her working classes. If the law gave full scope to that energy and intelligence, she might remain in her proud situation among the states of the civilized world; but if they hesitated while there was yet time, she, he was much afraid, would sink, like Venice of old, under the withering grasp of a selfish and sordid aristocracy.

Mr. *Heathcote* said, that those hon. Members who had sat in the two last Parliaments were aware of the decided course he had taken on this subject, and that he had always advocated the Corn-laws as they then existed. He would not retract one iota of what he had said, but unfortunately, after the motion of the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) and the motion of the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) and the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Villiers,) it became those who entertained similar opinions to his own to make the best terms they could, and to see, as well as they were able, that the great interests they defended were as little injured as possible. He believed the question opened by the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Villiers) was a very wide one; but he should confine himself to those practical parts of it which then pressed upon them, and state, in a way that he hoped would be manly, one or two facts which he thought the House would not deem unimportant. He would, however, request permission first to say one word on the proposition of the noble Lord the Member for the city of London. He was afraid the noble Lord was too well acquainted with his sentiments, for he had always expressed his opinion, and he now did so most strongly against any fixed duty. He said that a fixed duty must be kept or not. If it were not kept it would be an absolute delusion to the farmer; in fact, a much lower duty than the present or any duty they could make by a graduated scale. A fixed duty was always too high or too low. With reference to the grower, when corn was low, such a duty was an imperfect protection, and, when high, it formed a great impediment to the introduction of foreign corn. It was therefore unjust both to consumer and producer. It appeared to him capable of arithmetical demonstration, that a graduated scale was better both for the consumer and producer than a fixed duty. He would now say a few words on the proposition of the right hon. Baronet. He had heard a great deal of what had fallen from the right hon. Baronet with much pleasure, but it appeared to him that the great mass of the arguments he produced, were much more in favour of the Corn-laws as they were, than in favour of an alteration of them. The right hon. Baronet stated, that he did not believe his alterations would effect any material mitigation of the distress which prevailed in the manufacturing districts, and he believed that Lord Melbourne had expressed a similar opinion respecting the proposition of the late Government. The right hon. Baronet had also stated some interesting facts to show that the people of this country had far greater command of the necessaries of life than the people of France, Belgium, and Russia. He had also brought forward many facts respecting Danish corn, all of which were in favour of keeping the Corn-laws as they then were; but the point which he (Mr. Heathcote) could not get over was, that although the right hon. Baronet told them he wished the price of corn to remain at about 54*s.* to 58*s.* a quarter, he should wish to alter a law under which the mean price of corn since it had been established was only 56*s.* This was the price desired by Mr. M'Culloch, a writer in the *Edinburgh Review*, and other political writers, and then he would ask, why alter the machinery which produced what they asked for? But although, perhaps, it would be useless to argue against that which had been decided on, he would say a few words respecting the Government proposition. He would admit, that a great number of persons in extensive districts approved of it, although they did so with great anxiety as to its result, still at the same time a larger party utterly rejected it, and deemed the duty proposed inadequate. A large meeting had been held in the county with which he was connected, which was attended by persons of the highest consideration, at which strong language was used, and the opinion of the meeting declared to be decidedly against the proposed alteration. There was also a great dissatisfaction expressed with reference to that part of it which related to the slight alteration of the averages. The right hon. Baronet had spoken of the great numbers who desired a change in the law, but the sole objection of the great mass of the agriculturists was to the mode of taking the averages. With respect to the proposed alteration in the duty on barley and oats great dissatisfaction was expressed even by parties who otherwise acquiesced in the measure, and one reason for his addressing the House that evening was, to urge that this part of the proposition should not be carried into effect. The noble Lord, the Member for Lincolnshire, (Lord Worsley) had stated the other night that a great quantity of wheat had come in above the maximum duty proposed by the right hon. Baronet. This was also the case with barley and oats, for it appeared that with respect to barley 126,000 quarters had come in at 15*s.* 4*d.*, and 217,000 quarters at 13*s.* 10*d.*, when the maximum duty was only 11*s.* under the new bill. It was still more strongly the case with oats of which out of 3,300,000 quarters which had been imported, 1,400,000 had come in at a higher duty than 8*s.*, the maximum duty for oats; 540,000 at 7*s.* 9*d.*, 598,000 at 9*s.*, 467,000 at 10*s.*, and 166,000 at 8*s.* But he acknowledged what he most feared was the event of a great surplus arising, when exactly the same evils would recur that were experienced in 1822-3, one of the most miserable periods of agricultural distress. It was to warn hon. Gentlemen against this contingency that he called their attention to the subject. He confessed he could not understand the returns of the prices of corn upon the continent, for he found them differ very much. He thought it would be much better if, instead of giving the report of the consuls for a single year, and from great farmers only, they were to report for a series of years, and for considerable districts of country. But if these returns were correct they threw considerable doubts on many statements before the House. He found the freight from Denmark was from 3*s.* to 3*s.* 6*d.*, which was about the same as from Boston and the coast of Lincolnshire. The average price of wheat in Denmark for the last 25 years was 28*s.*, of barley 14*s.*, of oats only 10*s.* These were facts stated by the right hon. Baronet, but let him carry the House a little further. The average price for the last seven years of the series was only 25*s.*, and he said that variation of 3*s.* might utterly destroy all their calculations, and produce an effect in this country that might throw hon. Gentleman into a dilemma as to their responsibility in having passed such a law. The average of barley for the last seven years was 1*s.* lower; that of oats was the same. But he thought he had a right to pick out the low years of the series. He found that in 1824, the price of wheat in Denmark was 16*s.*, of barley 8*s.*, of oats 6*s.* In 1825, the price of wheat was 17*s.*, of barley 9*s.*, of oats 7*s.* It might be said that was from accidental circumstances, but in the seven years which followed 1821, the average price of wheat in Denmark was only 18*s.*, of barley 10*s.*, of oats 8*s.* Now, he would ask hon. Gentlemen opposite, were they prepared to deal with such prices as those? They would find, too, that the quantity was not insignificant. Last year, 530,000 quarters of barley were exported from Denmark. The total quantity produced was last year 1,000,000 quarters; in 1824, 1,200,000 quarters; and in other years about 1,000,000, while Mr. Meek and others said that these quantities were susceptible of great increase. When he looked at these circumstances, he felt justified in withholding his acquiescence from the proposition of the right hon. Baronet, until he received further information; still more justified in withholding it from that of his noble Friend (Lord J. Russell), and still more in giving his opposition to that of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton. He hoped he might be permitted to allude to some other circumstances. One hon. Gentleman had stated, that when they made the Corn-law, they did not make it for the benefit only of the proprietors of the soil, but also of the people of the country. He had never defended the Corn-laws in reference to the great proprietors, nor to those who possessed great masses of capital; he had always defended it in reference to the immense multitude of small proprietors, to the tens of thousands of small farmers, the flower of your middle classes, who were still more strongly determined to uphold these Corn-laws. Let the House consider what must be the situation of these small proprietors, many of whom had bought their land when 105*s.* was considered a fair price, while now the average price of wheat was only 56*s.*, and which you now propose still further to reduce. Forty years ago the working classes throughout the agricultural districts were accustomed to eat the blackest and coarsest bread, — the hon. Member for Yorkshire had stated the fact,—whereas now the same people had the finest wheaten loaf; and he was glad, on the authority he had quoted, together with that of the hon. Member for High Wickham, to be able to state that this amelioration had taken place, for he was thereby led to hope that the condition of the people was not quite so bad as it had been represented to be. But when the landed proprietors were so loudly called upon to relieve those distresses, by lowering their rents, let him in return ask the master manufacturers whether they were willing to take less profit on their goods? He could not too earnestly caution the agriculturists against falling into the error of competing with the master manufacturers on the low-wages system, for if they did, they would reduce the labouring classes of their branch of occupation to the same state of frightful destitution in which the operatives were involved. For himself, he considered there could not be so frightful a prospect, as a competition of low wages between our operatives and those of the continent. He would just touch upon one more topic, and then he would terminate his observations. The point to which he wished to direct attention was, the arguments which had been directed against making this country dependent upon a foreign state for her supply of food. On this point he might with great justice refer to the warning uttered by the late President of the United States, who, on the eve of an appeal to the country, most emphatically warned his fellow-countrymen against ever suffering themselves to be dependent for an article of primary necessity upon a foreign state. Hon. Gentlemen were in the habit of saying that it was very natural to buy food where it was cheapest, and that, therefore, it was expedient to go to America for corn; but what would be the course of this traffic if it were to be entered into upon a large scale? England must first send to America for cotton; then, having manufactured it, she must return it in that form to the United States before she could receive corn in exchange for it; so that, for the purpose of obtaining her supply of food, England must send four times across the Atlantic before she could get it. But what was to happen if, whilst thus dependent for corn from abroad, a war were to arise, and this was a contingency which every now and then threatened to occur, for there was a party in America very far from friendly to England; and America likewise was not herself free from fluctuations in the price of corn, for there was every now and then a dearth which brought the crops very short of the necessary supply. Prices in New York had been higher, in 1837 and 1838, than in England, and the fluctuation greater. The American government would, in such an event, place a restriction upon the exportation of corn, as also was done in Belgium and other of the continental states when the supply of corn was low. The only conclusion therefore to which he could come upon this branch of the inquiry was, that not only was it cheapest, but it was also safest to grow what corn was wanted for consumption in England, at home. How, it might be objected, was this to be done, with so large and so increasing a population to feed? The House, however, was perhaps not aware that agriculture had vastly improved within the last few years, and that the agriculturists themselves were now a very different class to what they formerly were; there being a general desire amongst them for acquirements of a scientific nature, which rendered them much more capable of promoting the produce of their land than they formerly were. The result of this change had been, that there was scarcely a field which did not now produce much more than it had formerly done, and he could not help entertaining a strong belief that the period of years next ensuing would witness a similar, if not a much greater, improvement in the science of agriculture than had been observed within the present century, great as that advancement had been.

Mr. *Leader* had heard with much satisfaction the assurance of the hon. Gentleman, that agriculture had improved to so great an extent, and that so great an increase had taken place in the produce of land. He firmly believed in the truth of these statements; but the conclusion to which he came was, that the greater the improvement that had been effected in agriculture, and the greater the quantity of produce that they were able to obtain from the land, the less did the agricultural interest stand in need of protection. There was one point on which he felt he could fully agree with the hon. Gentleman, and that was in opposing most heartily the fixed duty of the noble Lord (Lord John Russell). He had been much amused by some of the authorities cited by the noble Lord the Member for Hertford, in support of his views on the Corn-laws. Among others, Mr. George Frederick Young, formerly a Member of that House, had been mentioned. Now, Mr. George Frederick Young was a most respectable man, but when a Member of the House he was decidedly not looked on as a certain authority. He very often voted one night with the party opposite, and one night with those on his side of the House. Sir Henry Parnell and Lord Fitzwilliam had also been quoted, but the opinions quoted had been given early in life, and had been greatly modified in maturer years. With respect to the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton, all he could say was, that he rejoiced very much in the conversion of the noble Lord, and wished there were many more such converts. Some of the hon. Gentlemen opposite appeared to have conceived a very erroneous opinion as to the feeling of the working classes. They found that certain Anti-Corn-law meetings had been interrupted, and therefore they concluded that the people were favourable to the existing Corn-laws. He could say, from his acquaintance with many of the working classes, that such was not the case. The working classes had no sympathy with those who advocated the Corn-laws, nor did they place any confidence in Gentlemen opposite; but the working classes were averse to class legislation, and wished to get rid of it; and in getting rid of class legislation, they believed they would get rid of Corn-laws and of other abuses at the same time. The working men, they might rest assured, had too much intelligence to feel any attachment to the Corn-laws. It had been said by Franklin 70 years ago, that all acts for the restriction of trade were either particular blunders, or measures passed for private advantage under the pretence of a solicitude for the public good. He had not been present when his hon. Colleague (Captain Rous) had addressed the House. He very much respected his hon. Colleague; but when his hon. Colleague ventured to speak in the name of all the better part of the constituency of Westminster, the right hon. Baronet might rest assured that the statement was calculated to convey a very incorrect view of the people of Westminster. His hon. Colleague had certainly a right to speak for one-half of the people of Westminster, but he could not fairly claim a monopoly of the constituency to his own share. Even of those who supported his hon. Colleague, there were very many who were not satisfied with the plan of the right hon. Baronet, and of those who had supported him there was not one, he felt assured, who did not entirely disapprove of the plan. Of the non-electors among the inhabitants of Westminster, he felt satisfied there were very few who did not desire the total repeal of the Corn-laws. Much had been said in blame of the agitation that had prevailed with reference to this question; but did the Gentlemen who condemned the people for agitating condemn agitation itself, or only agitation as directed against their favourite system? What were the non-represented among the people to do but agitate? The counties, what with the *50l.* tenants, were entirely in the hands of those whom they considered their political oppressors; and in the towns bribery and intimidation. ["*Hear, hear.*"] He did not mean to say that bribery and intimidation were to be attributed to either party exclusively, but the exten to which they prevailed put the towns under the control of property, leaving no channel through which the wishes of the electors might be expressed. The petitions of the people were not fairly treated, and public meetings, they had been told, were of little use; then, what were the people to do but to agitate? But had the agitation been all on one side? For his own part, he never heard a more fierce and incendiary speech than had been delivered a few evenings since by the hon. Member for Knaresborough. That hon. Gentleman generally spoke strongly when he did speak, for he was always thoroughly in earnest, and he liked to hear a man that spoke in earnest; but yet he would ask whether the hon. Gentleman really seriously believed the monstrous charges that he had brought forward against certain manufacturers? [Mr. *Ferrand:* Entirely.] Then the hon. Gentleman was bound in honour to prove, in this House, or before a committee, the truth of those charges, and to expose to the House the men whom he so fiercely attacked. But the hon. Gentleman directed his charges against manufacturers generally. [Mr. *Ferrand:* No.] He was glad to hear the hon. Member say so, for he had understood the hon. Member to apply the expression "blood-stained men" generally. [Mr. *Ferrand*: No.] He had certainly believed the application to have been made generally; and if so, he should like to know how those belonging to the manufacturing interest, but sitting on the other (the Ministerial) side of the House, must have felt at the time. He was very well convinced that the right hon. Baronet would rather have been without the vote of the hon. Member for Knaresborough, than have it accompanied by such a speech. The bill of the right hon. Baronet would effect very little alteration in the corn trade, and would apply no remedy to the evils under which the people were suffering. Trade was languishing and manufacturers starving, owing to the monstrous tariff that was kept up as a part of the system for the protection of the landowners. That tariff made it impossible for foreign countries to take those things from us that we could supply them with on lower terms. Our own tariff provoked retaliation from other countries. The Spanish Government had lately put a new tariff in force, by which the duties on all English goods had been increased 50 per cent. A noble Lord (the Earl of Ripon) had received a deputation on this subject most courteously, and had talked of negotiations that were pending; but of what use were negotiations? Negotiations with France, Spain, and other countries, had been pending for more than ten years, but the moment foreign countries were remonstrated with, they turned round upon us, and told us to look at our own tariff, the worst in all Europe. He did not believe the Spanish Government would derive any advantage from what they had done. An additional revenue they would certainly not raise, but they would raise an army of smugglers, and Spain as well as England would suffer from the irregular character that would be given to the trade in consequence. He had listened with surprise to some hon. Members connected with the landed interest, who had expressed dissatisfaction with the bill of the right hon. Baronet. Why, what would Gentlemen have? They had got protection enough surely. The manufacturers, he felt convinced, were not satisfied with it; but there was one important good which the bill had done—the middle classes had for some time stood aloof from the working classes, but they now saw how vain were their expectations of relief from the House of Commons, and would join heartily with the working classes in procuring an extensive reform.

Mr. *Mainwaring* was understood to say, that he rose to vindicate the landed interests from the aspersions cast upon them by the hon. Gentleman, and to pay a tribute of admiration to those classes of the people who had displayed so much patience under their sufferings. He believed that the distresses of the people originated greatly in the causes which had been stated to the House by the right hon. Baronet at the head of her Majesty's Government. When the late Ministers were defeated by that majority which was fatal to them, they went home and made their wills, and the legacy which they left to the country was a fixed duty. The country, however, was unwilling to accept the boon, and, thereupon, their allies, or pioneers, immediately commenced a system of agitation which was calculated to engender strife, but to produce no benefit. Attempts had been made in the neighbourhood whence he came to inflame the public mind, and to stir up those who had experienced the willingness of resident gentry to assist and relieve them in their distresses, and who, together with himself, had found employment for them. Placards of the most inflammatory nature were posted, and altogether the movements were so alarming, that the magistracy thought it necessary to have the military in attendance. A meeting was called, and thousands of persons attended it, amongst whom were those who had been relieved in the manner he had stated, and the curate of the parish, who, in a temperate speech, after the violent harangues which had been delivered by the orators from Manchester, and other places, convinced them how erroneously they would act if they signed the petition which had been proposed to them; and he believed that the people, when left to their own good sense, and when not misled by false representations, would come to the same conclusion. Of one thing he was quite convinced—namely, that the new school of political economy was not calculated to improve the feelings or the judgment of the people. Believing the motion of the hon. Gentleman to be ruinous in its tendency, he should vote against it.

Mr. *Brotherton* said, if his poor constituents could be present in that House and hear the great alarm that had been expressed lest they should have cheap bread, they would not be a little astonished. The hon. Member for Rutlandshire had convinced him (Mr. Brotherton) that there was no necessity for a Corn-law. For he had shown that such great improvements had taken place in agriculture, and were likely to take place, that we should be able to produce corn in such abundance, and at so cheap a rate as not to need supplies from foreigners. He would ask the noble

Lord, the Member for Hertford, who had made some observations relative to the petitions that had been presented on this subject, whether the people could be brought to petition if they had no grievances to complain of? The people felt they were starving, and therefore they petitioned. The noble Lord had talked about the exasperation of one class of the people against the other, but did he mean to say that the allegations that had been made by those who opposed the Corn-laws were untrue? He (Mr. Brotherton) remembered being very much amused upon one occasion, by hearing the hon. Member for Oxford say, that he preferred quiet error to unruly truth. Truth enlightens some minds and inflames others. Something had been said about the price of corn at Amsterdam being as high as in this country, but that related to particular seasons, and if the average of years was taken, it would be found that corn in this country was 50 per cent. higher than in Amsterdam. It had also been clearly shown that corn here was 30*s.* a quarter higher than in Denmark. If that was the case, had not the people of England cause for complaining? The people said they had no food, and yet Members of Parliament were found lamenting lest there should be too great an abundance. He (Mr. Brotherton) had not got up for the purpose of making a long speech, but to state facts. In the manufacturing districts the merchants were bankrupts, and the manufacturers ruined: trade was paralysed, and artisans unemployed. A great number of the population was starving. Those things had been admitted by the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government, but as several hon. Members appeared from their speeches to entertain doubts upon the subject, he would bring forward a few facts to show the state of things in the districts with which he was connected. He was happy to be able to furnish these details, as the noble Lord, the Member for Hertford, had said that one fact was worth a dozen assertions. An investigation had been carried on in the borough of Manchester and Salford in December of the last year, and at that time it was found that there were 5,492 uninhabited dwellings, 681 untenanted shops and offices, and 116 mills and other places of labour unoccupied, making a total of 6,289 buildings unoccupied, the annual rental of which was 100,000*l.*, and the steam-power about 1000 horses. Here then was a fact that must convince any man of the existence of distress in that district. He wished the House next to consider the depreciation of property. It had been thought that the millowners were very prosperous, but he could tell hon. Members that he knew of one case in which machinery, that cost about 50,000*l.*, and had been worked seven years, and which had been valued in July, 1841, at 21,564*l.* 19*s.* 11½*d.*, had been sold in December, 1841, and January, 1842, for 5,000*l.* There was another case in which a mill and cottages in the neighbourhood of Manchester, which had cost 120,000*l.*, had been sold for 36,000*l.* In another instance, a mill, valued at 21,000*l.* had been sold for 7,000*l.*, and in another, a mill and machinery, that had cost 40,000*l.* had been sold for less than 10,000*l.* To these facts he begged to add another, that cottage property had fallen from 30 to 40 per cent. Now what was the case with respect to the poor rate? The expenditure on the poor of Manchester for the years 1836, 1837, was 24,261*l.* 10*s.*, and in 1841, it was 38,938*l.* 2*s.* 5*d.* in addition to private subscriptions amounting to many thousand pounds. The poor-rate of Salford, in 1836, was 5,202*l.*, and, in 1841, it was 17,401*l.* He would next request the House to observe the effect that the poverty that existed had in increasing crime. In 1831 the number of prisoners committed for trial at the New Bailey, Salford, was 1,000. In 1836, which was a year of plenty, it was 1,031. But in 1841 the number had increased to 1,992. So that from 1831 to 1836 there had been an increase of only 31, whilst from 1836 to 1841 the number had nearly doubled. He would next proceed to show the influence of the Corn-law upon trade. An inquiry had been instituted relative to the receipts of tradesmen, and the result was, that whereas the receipts of fifty shopkeepers in Salford had in 1839 been 197,700*l.*, their receipts in 1841 had been only 130,500*l.*, showing a decrease of 67,200*l.* This falling off would be confined principally to the poor. The higher and the middle classes could still afford to purchase the necessaries of life, but the poor were not in a condition to do so. Such was the state of the manufacturing districts. Let the

House compare such a condition with that of the land. He found that every quarter the rents were rising and the value of land increased. Much had been said about the cause of the distress, which it had been asserted could not be attributed to the Corn-laws. It had been alleged to have been produced by the war with China, the alarm of war in Europe, the emigration of agricultural labourers into the manufacturing districts, the increase of machinery, over-production, joint-stock banks, and speculation. Such it had been said were the causes of the distress. Yet it had been found that the exports had been greater than in previous years, and that the reduction was caused by a falling-off in the home trade. This country had imported and entered for home consumption since July, 1828, 14,800,860 quarters of foreign wheat and flour, and on the average of the thirteen years the duty paid was 5*s*. 7*d*. per quarter, which proved that not a grain of it had been allowed to be brought into consumption for less than 70*s*.

	£.
Now 14,800,860 quarters, at 70*s*., is	51,803,010
This wheat might have been purchased abroad for 40*s*. per quarter	29,601,720
The consequent loss to the consumer was	22,201,290

The hon. Gentleman then contended that the price of wheat in England on an average had been 50 per cent. higher than on the continent.

Taking the annual consumption at 18,000,000 quarters, the cost of 180,000,000, at the average price of 57*s*., is . .	513,000,000
At the price it might have been purchased . . .	342,000,000
Loss to the consumer in ten years . .	171,000,000

The average price of wheat in 1838-9-40, was 67*s*. 3*d*.

Now, 54,000,000 quarters consumed in three years, at 67*s*. 3*d*., is . . .	181,575,000
In 1834-5-6 the price was 44*s*. 8*d*.; 54,000,000 quarters, at 44*s*. 8*d*. is	120,600,000
	£60,975,000

the difference between the two periods; and even at the lowest period we were 50 per cent higher than on the continent. Now the inference from the above facts was, that the country had been paying upwards of twenty millions a-year extra price, beyond what had been paid in the years 1834, 1835, and 1836. To illustrate the manner in which dear food operated against the home trade and created distress, an investigation had been made in several large manufacturing establishments with a view of ascertaining what proportion of the earnings of the operatives was spent in agricultural produce. In one establishment the amount of wages paid in 1836, was 33,000*l*.—the amount expended in food was 22,000*l*., leaving 11,000*l*. for rent, clothing, and other necessaries of life. In 1840, the amount of wages was the same, but the amount expended in food was 29,000*l*., leaving only 4000*l*. for rent, clothing, and other outgoings. Investigations in other establishments were attended with the same results. The decrease in the demand for articles of clothing and furniture produced want of employment, and want of employment produced distress and destitution. The hon. Member then read the following document relative to the exportation of cotton twist:

"In 1815, we exported 9,241,547lbs. of cotton twist, and the declared value was 1,781,077*l*., which is 3*s*. 10*d*. per lb.; after deducting the price of the cotton (1*s*. 9*d*.), there were left for labour, capital, &c., 2*s*. 1*d*. per lb., or 962,660*l*. In 1830, we exported 64,645,342lbs. of twist, the declared value was 4,133,741*l*., being 1*s*. 3¼*d*. per lb.; after deducting the price of the raw material, 7½*d*., there remained 8*d*. per lb. for labour, profit, and interest of capital. In 1840, we exported 118,470,223lbs. of cotton twist, the declared value being 7,101,308*l*, which is 1*s*. 2⅜*d*. per lb.; after deducting the price of cotton 8⅛*d*., leaves 6¼*d*. for labour, interest of capital, wear and tear, merchants' and manufacturers' profit and all other expences, 3,084,598*l*. The price of wheat was, in 1815, 65*s*. 7*d*., in 1830, 64*s*. 3*d*., 1840, 66*s*. 4*d*. If the yarn exported in 1840 had left as much to the spinner, merchant, and artisan for labour and profit as in 1815, it would have amounted to £12,340,647

Whereas they only received . .	3,084,598
Loss	£9,256,049

We thus see that the manufacturer had 962,660*l*. for working 9,241,547 lbs., and 3,084,598*l*. for 118,470,223 lbs., which was three times the amount for more than twelve times the quantity. In 1815 a piece of calico cost 19*s.*, in 1841 it might be bought for 5*s.* 6*d.* He contended that the improvements in manufactures had been paid to the agriculturists. There had been improvements in machinery, there had been increased produce from the land, but there had been no depreciation of the price of bread. All the manufacturers had to do was to give three pieces of calico for the same quantity of corn for which they gave one piece in 1815. The hon. Member proceeded to contend that the improvement in machinery tended in no way to produce the distress which too frequently prevailed in the manufacturing districts. Twenty times as many persons were employed in manufactures now as were employed before the improvements in machinery took place. The plough had displaced more labourers than the spinning-jenny. It was to the manufacturers that the agriculturists of England were indebted for their high prices. How different was the condition of the agriculturist in Ireland, where manufactures did not exist! There the price of labour was low; but the price of food high. No portion of its population, or but a very small portion of its population, found employment in manufactures. All were dependent upon the land. What was the consequence? Universal poverty. In Ireland there was plenty of competition for farms, but there was not sufficient employment for the people. He would ask what they meant to do with those who could not obtain employment? Did they mean to starve them to death? Did they mean to act like Pharaoh and Herod? A great deal had been said about machinery having the effect of displacing a great number of hands. That was a complete fallacy. The population of Lancashire in 1779 was about 350,000 persons; in 1841, it was 1,667,034—an increase of 375 per cent. In 1770 not more than 60,000 persons were employed in the cotton trade; in 1836 it was computed that there were 1,600,000. It could not, therefore, be maintained that the effect of machinery in manufactures was to diminish the demand for human labour. Far different, however, was the effect of the improvements which had taken place in agriculture. Every improvement there must tend to decrease the necessity for employing labourers. He (Mr. Brotherton) believed that the interests of agriculture and of manufactures were intimately allied, and that one could not be destroyed without leading to the destruction of the other. What had given the additional value to land in England? Manufactures. The manufacturers had never made a fortune themselves without at the same time making a greater fortune for the landowners. That was a fact which no man could doubt. When the Corn Bill of 1815 was proposed, enlightened men opposed it. Some authorities had been mentioned. He would name one—a man upon whom he had always looked with great respect—the late Sir Robert Peel—who opposed the introduction of the Corn-laws, and showed clearly that it was by encouraging manufactures and removing all restrictions on trade that the prosperity of the land must depend. He had, he hoped, shown from facts that the distress existing in the manufacturing districts had been caused by the Corn-laws, and that if those laws were repealed a great improvement would take place in the condition of all classes of society. But he wished it to be understood that he did not oppose the Corn-laws merely because the manufacturers were in distress. He should still oppose them if the manufacturing interests were at that moment as prosperous as they were unfortunately depressed. He should oppose them under any circumstances, because in his estimation they were unjust. It was said that the landed interest had a prescriptive right to the monopoly in food—a prescriptive right that had existed for the last 140 years. It was said that they had a right to tax the rest of the community for their own advantage. If that were true—if for 140 years the landed interest had enjoyed the exclusive right of feeding the British people, and to take care of the domestic agriculture of the country, then they were at least bound to supply them with a sufficiency. History, and the documents on the Table of the House, told them that between the years 1740 and 1750, there were exported from this country upwards of 8,000,000 quarters of corn. And what did the landed interest do? They passed a law to give the agriculturist a bounty on the exportation of corn, and 1,500,000*l.* were actually paid out of the Treasury for that purpose. Now, if there had been any sort of agreement between the manufacturers and the landed interest, that the latter should feed the people upon home grown corn, would not the manufacturers of that time have been justified in coming forward, and saying, "you have no right to export your corn: if you have an abundance of it you ought to let us have it cheap—you have undertaken to feed us—when Providence blesses your toil with abundance, give us, your fellow countrymen, the advantage of it. But did the manufacturers do this? No; they allowed the agricultural interest to export their corn, because they thought they had a right to dispose of the produce of their estates in the best market they could find. In the same way had the labouring man a right to dispose of his labour, or the fruits of his labour, in the best market he could find. This right belonged as much to the poor labourer as to the rich proprietor of the soil. He looked, therefore, upon this question as a question of right. He was astonished when he heard hon. Members state that the measure now brought forward was a concession to the manufacturing interest. He denied the accuracy of that view, and maintained that the manufacturers had a right to infinitely more than it was proposed to give them. He knew very well that a total repeal of the Corn-laws could not be carried at this time; but that was no reason why he should refrain from stating that it was only by a total repeal that the manufacturers would obtain what right and justice would give them. The agriculturists were constantly urging that they were the manufacturers' best customers. It was true that they were purchasers to some extent of the produce of manufacturing industry and skill. But upon what terms was the trade between the two interests carried on? The manufacturers supplied the agriculturists with cheap commodities, in return for which the agriculturists supplied the manufacturers with dear food. The agriculturists took from the manufacturers a great portion of what belonged to them; and then, because they gave them a small part of it back, they said, "We are your best customers." The agriculturists said that they were entitled to protection because they had invested capital in the improvement of land, and gave employment to a great many labourers. They took care, however, not to say a word about rent. Their only concern was for the farmers and agricultural labourers, who would be ruined and reduced to destitution if there were no protection. Now he did not believe that there would be much land thrown out of cultivation if the Corn-laws were repealed to-morrow. But if any were really thrown out of cultivation, he would much rather that the loss should be paid by direct taxation. The country would then know the extent of the mischief, and would be prepared to meet it. But he denied that the landed interest had any right to protection. Suppose a person erected a mill in this country, and expended a great deal of capital in machinery. Then, suppose that a foreigner invented a much better machine, which, in a degree, should supersede that of the English mill-owner—what would be thought of the manufacturer who should come to Parliament and ask for protection against his foreign rival? If foreigners made better ships or better machinery, the English shipowner or the English manufacturer must bear the competition. They could not come to Parliament and ask it to pay their bills. If the English manufacturer borrowed money upon his manufactures, he must pay the interest himself. The landowners, on the contrary, after involving the country in debt, and spending more than their annual incomes, came down to Parliament and said, "It is necessary that we should keep up our station, wherefore give us an act which will enable us to throw the burdens we have brought upon ourselves upon the shoulders of the manufacturing classes. The hon. Member proceeded to comment upon the injustice of laws which taxed the poor man 20 per cent., while they taxed the rich man only 1 per cent. Such laws were glaringly unjust, and ought not to be persisted in. The immediate and total repeal of the Corn-laws might, to a certain extent, and for a limited time, affect the interests of the landowners, but in the end he believed it would operate very much to their advantage. It was said, that these laws were necessary on account of the burdens which were imposed upon the land. If it were true that the land was subjected to any special peculiar burdens, let them be removed. It was subject to no peculiar burden that he knew of except the poor-rate, the county-rate, and the highway-rate, amounting altogether to about 6,000,000*l.* a-year. So that, taking the annual produce of corn at 45,000,000 quarters, the burdens peculiar to the land would not amount to 2*s.* 6*d.* a quarter. With what face, then, could it be asked that the people should pay a tax of at least

12*s.* or 14*s.* a quarter? He would not take up the time of the House by entering into any detail to show the effect of the Corn-laws upon wages. But upon that point the manufacturers had facts to oppose to assertions. Every man now-a-days knew that when corn was cheap wages were better than when corn was dear. Now, indeed, that the price of corn was so high, the manufacturers gave no wages at all. Common sense would tell that when corn was cheap the people would have more money to spend in manufactures, and so the prosperity of both interests would be promoted. In Ireland, where corn was dear, wages were low. In America, where wages were high, provisions were cheap. Even the noble Lord the Member for Lancashire, had admitted, that wages had nothing to do with the price of bread. The population of this country was now increasing at the rate of 300,000 or 400,000 a-year. This increased population could not be employed in agriculture; it might be employed in manufactures. Extend your commerce, take off the restrictions which shackle your trade, and rest assured that you will find employment for the people. The people demanded only justice and fair play. They did not want to reverse the order of things. They were taught that if they sowed they would reap—if they worked they would be rewarded. But what was the case now? The precept was reversed—the idlers were fed and the industrious sent starving away. [*Cries of "question."*] He begged pardon if he trespassed too much on the patience of the House; but his constituents were deeply interested in this question. He was not one who occupied much of the time of the House, and, generally speaking, he was not favourable to long speeches. On the present occasion, he had only been anxious to put the House in possession of some facts which he deemed to be important. He should not have noticed the observations of the hon. Member for Knaresborough, (Mr. Ferrand), if that hon. Gentleman had not repeated that evening, that all that he stated on a former occasion was true. He did not know whether the hon. Gentleman was then in his place, [Mr. Ferrand, intimated, that he was present.] He (Mr. Brotherton) did not know whether it would be Parliamentary or not; but he would state to the hon. Member for Knaresborough, that if he (Mr. Brotherton) were to judge of his speech, and of the correctness of it, by what he (Mr. Brotherton) knew to be untrue, he certainly should not value it very highly. He knew that there were some parts of it entirely destitute of foundation. The hon. Member said, that the hon. Member for Stockport worked his mills night and day, and that he had made a large fortune by such abominable cruelty. [Mr. *Ferrand*, "*No, no.*"] He (Mr. Brotherton) heard the hon. Member make that statement, and, for the hon. Member's information, he begged to tell him that the hon. Member for Stockport never had a mill in his life. Again, the hon. Member had classed him (Mr. Brotherton) amongst those who make the ledger their prayer-book, the counting-house their church, and mammon their God. If he had done so, he certainly had not reaped the worldly fruits which the hon. Member supposed to be derivable from such a course of life. His riches consisted not so much in the largeness of his means, as in the fewness of his wants. If he had not considered usefulness as superior to wealth he never should have been returned in the manner he had been. This fact he could glory in, that the town in which he had resided for forty years had returned him four times to Parliament, without imposing upon him the expenditure of a single shilling, and without his having solicited a single vote. Had he been a worshipper of mammon his townsmen, perhaps, would not have had so much respect for him. The hon. Member proceeded to comment upon the observations of the hon. Member for Knaresborough, and to express his conviction that the cotton trade, under proper regulations (and he had always been a supporter of the plan introduced by the late Sir Robert Peel for the right regulation of the trade), so far from being an injury to the people employed in it, would tend to the health, and comfort, and well-being of a very large class of society. He had advocated measures like these, years before the hon. Gentleman. He knew that there had been opposition on the part of the manufacturers to legislation on this subject, but he would never single out persons and say, because they had been prosperous, that they were therefore unjust. When the Prime Minister of England was the son of a cotton spinner, he thought he need not be ashamed of being one. He would not trespass longer on the time of the House, but he had felt it to be his duty to state his opinion on this subject, because he considered that the repeal of the Corn-law would be a great national benefit, and because he was sincerely convinced, if the Corn-law be not repealed, the destruction of the manufactures would take place, and in that destruction the landed interest would also suffer, inasmuch as the population would be returned on the landed proprietors, either to become paupers or to starve, the greatest misfortune which could happen to this country.

Mr. *Ferrand* rose only to explain. He was told, a few days ago, by an hon. Member who sat on the front bench opposite, the Member for the Tower Hamlets (Sir W. Clay), that he would be treated with contempt, and that no hon. Member would condescend to notice what he had said in the debate on this question; but it appeared that there had been some random shooting against him. An hon. Member had said, that he knew one thing which he (Mr. Ferrand) had uttered to be untrue. He would give his authority for asserting that the hon. Member for Stockport worked his mills night and day. In a letter which he had received, the writer stated, " I beg to inform you." [Cries of " *Name, name,*" " *No! no!*"] I will. The writer says, " I beg to inform you that Mr. Cobden's printing mills, near Chorley, are worked night and day, and that I have heard of others similarly engaged." [Cries of " *Name, name,*" " *No! no!* said the hon. Member."] Is my word disputed [" *Name, name,*" and cries of " *No! no!*"] I have stated the fact, and I hope the House will be of opinion that I have said sufficient to convince every one that I did not make an assertion without having authority for doing so.

Capt. *F. Berkeley:* The hon. Member said that he would give his authority: I, therefore, request that he will do so.

Mr. *Ferrand:* I have stated the fact, and if what I have stated is disputed, there is an hon. Member sitting next me who knows what I have said to be true.

Lord *J. Manners* said, that he thought the House would thank him for putting an end to an altercation grateful to neither side; and he turned with pleasure to the concluding part of the speech of the hon. Member for Salford, he trusted, that the feelings and the animosities which prevailed out of doors on this subject would not find an echo within the walls of the house. He was greatly pleased with the tone in which the discussion had been carried on, and particularly with the speech of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, who introduced the motion, because he had not heard during the short time that he had been a Member of that House a more temperate speech. He wished to make one observation on what had fallen from the hon. Member for Salford; that hon. Member stated, that for every fortune the manufacturer had made, the landowner had made a larger one. There was a little exaggeration in this. He had, he confessed, felt anxious to address the House after the hon. Member for Westminster, because he thought that hon. Gentleman had dealt too hardly with the hon. Member for Rutland, who was placed in a very peculiar state, for, if he turned to his right hand, what did he behold? Total repeal. Was the prospect better if he looked to his left? alas! it was fixed duty, and if he wheeled round entirely, and looked for a cheer among the hon. Gentlemen behind him, what a fearful sight presented itself to his view? But what said the hon. Member for Westminster to the hon. Member for Rutland? why, he said, that there was only one point in which he could agree with him, and that was in his resistance to the motion of the noble Lord, the Member for London, and in his support of that of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton! Surely this was a gratuitous piece of cruelty. Certainly it could hardly be expected, that he was to combat the arguments of his hon. Friend; he was only surprised at seeing him still in the opposite ranks, but he wished to make an observation on one argument his hon. Friend had brought forward. His hon. Friend asked why Government had proposed the alteration in the Corn-law, with the view of keeping the average price of wheat at 56*s.* a quarter. His hon. Friend thought there was no necessity for introducing any new measure to effect this because 56*s.* had been the average price during the last few years. But the object of the Government was not only to make that the average price, but also to prevent great fluctuations. No one could regard with more pain than he did the distress of the country, but while he lamented that distress he could not attribute it to the same cause as the hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House. When he looked at the position not only of Europe, but of

Asia, Africa, and America; when he remembered the prosperity that a few years ago clothed the manufacturing districts where the distress was now so great; and remembered also that the Corn-laws were then in existence as now; that not only change of seasons, but war, and every treaty, he would not say might, but must contribute to produce that former prosperity or present distress—he could not force his reason to agree with those hon. Gentlemen, and say to the suffering people, "there—that one law is the cause of all your distress, remove it, and boundless prosperity is yours." He would entreat those hon. Gentlemen to reflect on the possibility of their being deceived. Suppose the Corn-laws were repealed; that the mills now stopped working were again in action; that the agricultural interest no longer existed to be pointed at as the cause of the manufacturing distress, and yet that distress again fell upon the manufacturers, to what cause would it then be attributed? Twelve years ago the rotten boroughs were the source of all evil, and Nottingham castle was burned, and Bristol sacked, that the Reform Bill might be carried, and those evils so put an end to. Then glorious were the anticipations indulged in from the 10*l.* franchise—great were the hopes that beef and mutton would come to all; but at length the delusion was over. Now the Corn-laws are the great bugbear. He did not say that the Corn-laws might not be improved, why the very proposition of the Government proved that they might. But he felt that hon. Members were wrong in attributing the distress so entirely to the Corn-laws. They had heard a great deal about the bigotry and intolerance of the farmers and the agricultural interests. Now, he would say nothing as to how the proposition of the Government had been received; but he would refer to the statement of a gentleman who was a practical farmer. That gentleman said, and he so said before it was at all known what the Government plan was likely to be.

"The population of the kingdom has increased 20 per cent. within the last ten years, and in that period corn has been 2*s.* a quarter cheaper than it was in the ten years before. I have no doubt that wheat will have to be produced at a cheaper rate than it has been, because cloth and cotton are cheaper; and, therefore, corn ought to be cheaper in its proportionate relation. It is my opinion, that corn ought to be produced at the lowest rate possible, so long as it is the production of this country."

Where were these words uttered? At an agricultural meeting held in the county of Leicester, and they were received with approbation by the great body of farmers there assembled. He trusted that the example which had been set that night of moderation would be imitated, and that the measure of the Government would receive that meed of praise which he felt confident it deserved, and knew it would ultimately obtain, however, for the moment, party feeling might have been excited against it. He anticipated for the measure of the right hon. Baronet not only the concurrence but the approbation of a large majority.

Sir *C. Napier* regretted very much that his hon. Friend had brought forward his motion, because it was evident that the right hon. Baronet opposite having refused to accept a duty of 8*s.*, was not likely to accept no duty at all, and he therefore thought that the motion which had been brought forward, was a great waste of the time of the House. He was an advocate of a fixed duty of 8*s.*, because he thought that was as much protection as the agriculturists had any right to expect. At the same time, he believed, that if once a duty of 8*s.* was levied, there would very soon be no duty at all. Why he wished for a slight change was, because he thought that all violent changes were dangerous, and, though the Corn-law was an unjust law, it ought not to be abrogated too suddenly. But, as he preferred the repeal of the Corn-laws to the sliding scale, if his hon. Friend pressed his motion to a division he should certainly vote for it. The noble Lord the other evening had remarked, and he thought with great justice, on the operation of the sliding scale on neighbouring states. He thought that no prudent merchant of America, Odessa, or Alexandria, would run the risk of sending a cargo of corn to this country when he found the price going down and the scale running up here. The Vice-President of the Board of Trade had the other evening made an assertion which he thought very extraordinary, and he really began to doubt whether he ever had crossed the Atlantic Ocean or not. The right hon. Gentleman stated, that if a merchant of Liverpool wrote to America for a cargo of corn, that cargo would arrive in Liverpool in six weeks. If a gentleman wrote a letter the very day the steam-boat sailed from Liverpool (and that boat only sailed once a fortnight), that letter could not be delivered in America under fifteen days. Now, the merchant in America had to purchase his cargo. He got his letter,—he read his letter first,—he read his letter and set about purchasing his corn. After that he freighted his ship; but before he freighted his ship he must look out for one; but perhaps there was not one ready. Now he would give him twelve days till the ship was cleared out to sail from America. This amounted to twenty-seven days. He had crossed the Atlantic Ocean very often, and he should say the average passage for a deep-laden vessel could not be under one month, unless the cargo was to come by a steam-boat, and if so, they might allow as much corn as they liked to come from America free of all duty, because the high rate of freight would be quite sufficient to keep it out of the market. The right hon. Baronet admitted that 20*s.* duty was a prohibition on the importation of corn; he needed not to have taken so high a duty, for 18*s.* duty was a prohibition on the importation of corn, for the printed paper laid before the House showed that a very trifling amount of corn had been admitted at that duty. The right hon. Baronet had begun his scale so uncommonly high, it was his (Sir C. Napier's) intention to vote against it. The right hon. Baronet had said, that he never wished to see corn in this country higher than from 54*s.* to 58*s.* Now he believed that the landowners could get on very well with corn at that price, and that the farmer could get on very well, and the agricultural labourer he believed, did not complain. But when there was an appearance of a bad harvest, or a few days of bad weather, up got the corn to 84*s.* a quarter. Now, if the agricultural labourer could only live with corn at 54*s.*, he (Sir C. Napier) should be glad to know how he was to economize so as to live with corn at 84*s.* a quarter? He ate no meat because he could not pay for it; he could not, therefore, economize in that. He drank no beer, because he could not afford it; he could not, then, economize in that. He might, perhaps, do with less tea and sugar and bread; but the only thing he could economize upon was his stomach, and the stomachs of his children; and when the right hon. Baronet's sliding-scale went down, the labourer would slide a great deal less bread into his stomach. Now, let him ask what was the position of a gentleman of moderate fortune living up to his income, and he was afraid most of them lived up to their incomes; let him suppose that the price of every article were increased by 25 per cent.; the gentleman had his bread, his meat, his wine, and many other luxuries, and if he was a prudent man, he would give up some of his luxuries—perhaps his wine, perhaps some other luxury, or he would make his wife and his daughters go less frequently to the milliner's, or he might go to his banker's and get credit or an advance of money; but what was the poor man to do? He had no luxuries to retrench upon, he had no banker, and he must therefore starve.

Captain *F. Berkeley* thought that the landlords and the landed interest did not always mean the same thing or go together. For instance, suppose a noble individual of great landed possessions, and an advocate for an alteration of the Corn-laws, died, well, on his heir, a person of different opinions, succeeding to the estate, the tenantry, who had hitherto returned Members unfavourable to the Corn-laws, immediately turned round, and sent Members who coincided with the new landlord's views. All he (Captain F. Berkeley) possessed was as a landed proprietor; still regretting that this motion had been made, because he believed that it would retard the object of the mover, and wishing that it had been otherwise worded, and that the word "now" had been left out, and disliking it on that ground, yet thinking that this motion would keep up a pressure which would ultimately have the effect of altering the Corn-laws, he deemed himself choosing the least of two evils—obliged to vote with the hon. Member.

Debate adjourned.

House resumed.—Committee to sit again.—House adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, February 21, 1842.

MINUTES.] Bills. 1ª· Bankrupt Laws Amendment; Bankruptcy, Insolvency, and Lunacy; County Courts; Improving the Law of Evidence.—2ª· Mitford's Divorce.

Petitions presented. By Lord Brougham, from Burton-upon-Yore, and from several places in Scotland, and by Viscount Melbourne, from Matham, for a Repeal of the Corn-laws.—By Lord Brougham, from Presbyterians of Letterkenny, and other places, for Legalizing Marriages by Dissenters.

TREATY FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF THE SLAVE-TRADE.] The Earl of *Aberdeen* said, that, in laying on the Table a treaty, signed by the representatives of the five great Powers of Europe, for the more effectual abolition of the slave-trade, he regretted to have to inform the House that the French ratification of this treaty had not been executed with that of the other powers. Nor was he enabled to inform the House the precise time at which the ratification bythat power might be expected. Their Lordships might be aware of the causes which had produced this decision on the part of the French Government, and which his Majesty the King of the French had thought furnished reasons sufficient to justify the suspension of his ratification. He felt it to be his first duty to abstain from saying or doing any thing which could possibly increase the difficulties which existed, or throw any additional obstacles in the way of the satisfactory termination of this business. The protocol, at the desire of the French Government, still remained open, and its execution by that power might yet be looked for. He might as well explain to the House the situation in which the other powers would be left by the course which had been taken. The treaties with France, of 1831 and 1833, remained in full force and effect. Indeed, the treaty at present under consideration was originated on that of 1833, which bound England and France to propose to the other great powers to accede to the treaty into which they had entered; and it was principally with a view of obtaining the perfect union of the five great powers that the present treaty was undertaken, and not with a view to the introduction of any new terms; for in the treaty, with only one exception, scarcely any deviation had been made from that already existing. By the treaty of 1831 a mutual right of search was fully recognised, and by that of 1833 the equipment articles furnished sufficient ground of caption, and afforded *primâ facie* evidence of guilt. The only addition made by the new treaty was an extension of the latitudes within which the former treaties were to apply, and although this treaty should not be in force with regard to France, these former treaties would remain in full operation within the restrictive space to which they referred. He need not more particularly allude to the causes which had operated with the French Government, but he might say that they were such as to render it impossible to suppose that affairs would long remain as they now stood, and he might express a confident hope that the treaty would be shortly ratified by that power.

Lord *Brougham* said, that he, with the rest of the people of this great country, had heard with the deepest regret the announcement, which had been now repeated by the noble Earl, of the temporary postponement, as he sincerely hoped it would prove, of the ratification of this important treaty. He, like the noble Earl, would carefully abstain from saying one word which might have a tendency to increase any of the obstacles that existed to a consummation which all parties were most anxious to secure. But he would take leave to add, to what the noble Earl had said, that if in any quarter whatever a suspicion prevailed, that there lurked beneath the ardent and universal desire of the people of this country, of all classes, and of all parties, to see this important treaty ratified, and its provisions honestly and faithfully executed—to see the infernal slave-traffic effectually put down—any sinister motive or fancy, or imagination, that thereby or there through might be secured any extension of any maritime right, or of any general right of search, or might be fortified any claim, or gratified any desire to increase the maritime power of this country, or to accomplish any object, or further any view whatever, except only the extinction of the African slave-trade, there never entered into the mind of man a more complete and absolute delusion. He would venture to say, that in no quarter—neither on the part of the Government, nor of those opposed to the Government, nor in any branch of either House of Parliament, nor in any party out of doors, nor in the mind of any one man in the whole of this empire—had there ever existed any idea whatever as connected with this subject, save and except that of securing the destruction of the slave-trade, and that the right of search was connected with any subject or consideration except that one single object, never entered into the mind of any one human being of the twenty-five millions who inhabited the British empire.

Local Courts.] Lord *Cottenham* presented three bills for the establishment of Local Courts. The noble Lord said, that in the course of the last Session of Parliament he had stated his reasons for abstaining from moving the second reading of three bills which he had laid before the

House upon the same subject, and he had then stated his intention of renewing those bills in the present Session. He was aware that there had been a public announcement, on the part of the Government, of an intention to introduce a bill, to a certain extent referring to the same subject, but he was anxious that the whole question should be discussed; and although it was not his intention to interfere with any step which the Government might think proper to adopt, he thought it his duty to redeem the pledge which he had given, and to lay the present Bills before the House. If the Government bills should meet his views upon the subject, he should be happy to abandon these bills, and he should abstain from proceeding any further with them until the House had had an opportunity of seeing the propositions of the Government. He would state the general nature of his bills. The first was a bill to establish courts of local jurisdiction in all the districts throughout the country, so that every town might have, at short intervals, a court of sufficient jurisdiction to decide questions of property to a certain amount, for which at present the remedy was insufficient. By a second bill, he proposed to take advantage of this jurisdiction for the purpose of the better administration of the Bankrupt and Insolvent Acts; and a third bill was intended to employ the same jurisdiction in executing those duties connected with the Court of Chancery now executed by special commissioners, and not well executed, at a great expense. Another object attempted to be carried out by one of the bills was to effect an amendment of the bankrupt law, recommended by the commissioners who had inquired into the subject.

The *Lord Chancellor* had no objection to the course proposed by his noble and learned Friend. Undoubtedly it would be better that the measures of the noble Lord, and of the Government, should be brought on to be discussed at the same time. He hoped very soon to lay on the Table of the House the bills proposed to be introduced by the Government.

Three bills with the following titles were then successively read a first time:—" A Bill for the Amendment of the Laws relating to Bankrupts, and for the better advancement of justice in certain matters relating to Debtors and Creditors." " A Bill to enable the Lord Chancellor to direct that certain Proceedings from the Court of Chancery, and matters in Bankruptcy, Insolvency, and Lunacy, may be carried to the County Courts." " A Bill to improve the Practice, and extend the Jurisdiction, of County Courts."—Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, February 21, 1842.

MINUTES.] New Member. J. D. Jackson, Esq., Dublin University.

Bill. 1°. Brandling Junction Railway.

Petitions presented. By Mr. S. Crawford, from Rochdale, and several other places, Mr. Divett, from Monmouth, Mr. Busfeild, from Bradford, Mr. Marsland, from parties in Manchester, and other places, Sir G. Larpent, Mr. Morris, Mr. G. Duncan, Mr. Ricardo, Mr. T. M. Gibson, and other hon. Members, from a great number of places, for the Repeal of the Corn-laws.—By an hon. Member, from Millers of Warrington, to encourage the Importation of Wheat in preference to Flour.—By Mr. Tente, from Mullingar, Sir R. Ferguson, Mr. J. Young, Mr. Murray, and Colonel Conolly, from various bodies of Presbyterians in Ireland, for the Legalization of Marriages by Dissenters.—By Sir William Clay, and Mr. Kemble, from Oakley-street, Lambeth, and St. Olaves, Southwark, for the Redemption of Metropolitan Bridge Tolls.—By Mr. T. Duncombe, from Northampton, for Repeal of the Poor-law Amendment Act; and from Mossley, and the Youug Men's Anti-Monopoly Association, Manchester, for Universal Suffrage.—By an hon. Member, from William Bury, for a Repeal of the Window Tax.—From Midman, for Abolition of Lay Patronage.—From H. and T. Greville, complaining of withholding Pension of Lieut. Archer.—From Kennington, to participate in Metropolitan Improvements.—From Samuel Gordon, complaining of Forgery of his Name to a certain Petition.

THE CASE OF MR. ELTON.] Captain *Berkeley* wished, in the first place, to correct an error which had appeared in the votes respecting a notice which he had given. It was stated that he intended to move for papers relative to the case of Mr. Elton, whereas he only intended to ask some questions of the gallant Admiral opposite. The first question was, whether the Admiralty was satisfied with the conduct of the court martial in the case of Mr. Elton; the second was, whether the Admiralty approved of the conduct of Captain Williams; and, thirdly, whether the release of Mr. Elton was not an act of clemency on the part of the Admiralty.

Sir *George Cockburn* thought, that he could give a satisfactory answer to the questions of the hon. Gentleman. In answer to the first question, he could safely say, on the part of the Admiralty, that a more honourable or able assembly of officers could not be got together, than the officers who formed the court martial, and the Admiralty had not the least doubt that they felt themselves fully justified in the proceedings which they took. To the second question which related to Captain Williams, he believed he could say for the

Board of Admiralty, that it was impossible for any officer to stand higher in their estimation than he did. The board had also lately received a letter from the admiral commanding on the station, in which he said that he was perfectly satisfied with the part taken by Captain Williams in the proceedings. With respect to the third question, as to whether it was an act of clemency on the part of the Admiralty to release the unfortunate gentleman, he would only reply, the board found that this gentleman having been considered in confinement on his way home, on his arrival in the Marshalsea, it thought that the interests of the service would be satisfied by his release. This was the only inducement of the Admiralty to order his release. He hoped that his answers were satisfactory.

Captain *Berkeley* said, that no doubt the gallant Admiral's answers would prove satisfactory to the officers forming the court martial, and also to Captain Williams.

Mr. *Jervis* wished to know by what law an officer could be dismissed the service, and then sentenced to be imprisoned.

Sir *G. Cockburn* replied, that it was part and parcel of the sentence, and though the dismissal took place before the imprisonment, he apprehended it was perfectly legal.

LAW OF DEODAND.] Mr. *Ewart* wished to learn from the Attorney-General, whether there was any intention on the part of the Government to propose an alteration of an anomaly which existed in the law at present, namely, that persons could obtain compensation for injuries inflicted on them on railroads, but the families of persons killed could not obtain the least compensation. He wished to know whether there was any intention to alter the law of deodand.

The *Attorney-General* replied, that he was not aware that there was any such intention.

SLAVE-TRADE SUPPRESSION TREATY.] Sir *R. Peel* presented, on the part of her Majesty, the treaty which had been agreed upon between Austria, Prussia, Russia, and Great Britain, for the suppression of the Slave-trade. He said, that in the gracious Speech which her Majesty had delivered from the Throne, she had announced the ratification of the treaty which had been signed by Austria, by Prussia, by Russia, and by France, for the suppression of the Slave-Trade, and that as soon as the ratifications had been exchanged, she would communicate that treaty to the House. This was that treaty as signed by the five powers. The ratifications of the treaty had been exchanged between this country, Russia, Austria, and Prussia. He regretted he could not announce to the House that the ratification on the part of France had been received. The protocol of the conference, however, was still open, and France might, if she thought fit, accede to the stipulations of the treaty. France had entered into no engagement as to the particular period at which she would exchange ratifications, but he would express his confident hope, not certainly founded on any assurance received from the government of France, that that exchange of ratifications was only suspended, and not permanently withheld. He did hope that the same motives which had induced France to unite with this country in inviting the three other powers to join in an object so interesting to humanity, would ultimately prevail in leading that country cordially to co-operate in the suppression of the slave-trade. Of course the treaties with France of 1831, and 1833, having the same object in view, still remained in undiminished force, but he did hope that a long interval would not elapse before France lent the moral sanction of her high authority, in combination with the other great powers of Europe, to the present effort for the suppression of this detestable traffic.

Viscount *Palmerston* was sure he was expressing the sentiments of the House, in expressing his own satisfaction at the presentation of the treaty which the right hon. Baronet had laid on the Table. He also most sincerely shared in the wish expressed by the right hon. Baronet. The right hon. Baronet had expressed a hope, which being a Member of her Majesty's Government, the right hon. Baronet might be entitled to do, but he not knowing what had passed, could only express his humble wish that the hope of the right hon. Baronet might be realised by the speedy exchange of ratifications with France. He could not but add to what had fallen from the right hon. Baronet, that, according to his understanding of the usual practice of governments, the only grounds which could be properly assigned by a Sovereign for refusing to ratify a treaty concluded by his plenipotentiary, were, first, that the plenipotentiary had entered into the negotiation and concluded the treaty without being authorised by his Government to do so, or else that the plenipotentiary having entered into the negotiation by the authority of his Government, had either exceeded or violated his instructions. He apprehended that neither of these objections could be felt by the French government on the present occasion. The original negotiation had been entered into, not by England towards France and the other three powers, but by France and England towards the other three powers. The draft of the treaty was equally proposed by the French, as by the English Government. The negotiation, therefore, was not undertaken unknown to the French government, but with its sanction and approval, and well might the French government sanction and approve a measure that reflected such high honour, not only on itself, but on its representative, Count Sebastiani, by whom the negotiation had been commenced. He apprehended that the first objection could not lie, nor, so far as he was informed, the second, because this treaty had been signed by the present representative of France at this court, of course in consequence of special instructions sent to him for the purpose, or of authority given to him before he left Paris to conclude this very treaty. It appearing to him (Viscount Palmerston) that no reason, consistent with the practice of governments, could be assigned by the government of France, for refusing its ratification to what was concluded by its own direction and sanction. He entirely shared in the hope, he might say the confidence, of the right hon. Baronet, that no consideration of a local character—no consideration even though it were one affecting the strength or solidity of a government or a ministry—should induce the sovereign of the French nation to withhold his ratification from that which, he must say, did such infinite honour to all parties engaged in it,

Change in Import Duties.] Mr. *P. M. Stewart* had to put a question to the right hon. Baronet of the greatest importance to commercial interests, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would give him as explicit an answer as he honourably could under the circumstances. In the speech from the Throne, the attention of Parliament had been drawn to the revision of the law affecting the trade in corn, and also the trade in other foreign produce. His questions related to those other articles of foreign produce. The effect of the mention of this subject in the Speech from the Throne, and of the articles in question being still unknown, had been to paralyse every market in the country. It was no exaggeration to say, that business to all intents and purposes was at a complete stand still—in the state of doubt in which merchants were left. His question to the right hon. Baronet was this he did not presume to ask, though he was almost tempted to do so, what were the articles to which the sentence in the royal Speech referred? He would be answered that the scheme could not be given out imperfectly or piecemeal; but he would ask the right hon. Gentleman, as some relief to commercial interests, to state when he intended to divulge his whole scheme, including those articles of "other foreign produce." He would beg further, as people out of the House were not versed in the technical terms of its proceedings, that the right hon. Baronet would not mention such or such a day of supply, but would, in plain English, name the day and date.

Sir *R. Peel* would first call the attention of the House to the state of the discussion on the Corn-laws. Without, in the slightest degree, wishing to precipitate the decision on that subject, or to complain of the time which the House might deem reasonable for its discussion, he trusted that those most adverse to the principle on which the measure proceeded, would bear in mind the manner in which the sense of the House had been expressed upon it, and would recollect that it made a great change in the existing law. The passing of this measure would permit corn now in bond to be brought into consumption at a much lower rate of duty than it was now subject to, and therefore he trusted there would be as much expedition as possible in passing the bill into a law. He was perfectly willing to open his views on financial and commercial policy. But, as he had stated before, there were considerations of public interest which would be intelligible to those who were aware of the financial condition of the country, that compelled him to postpone that statement until he could make it in a Committee of Ways and Means. That committee he would move for as soon as the Committee of Supply had ceased. He thought it of great importance that they should conclude as soon as possible the discussion on the Corn-laws. There was great inconvenience in directing their attention to more than one subject at the same time. It should be recollected that the corn trade was suffering from the same paralysis which the hon. Gentleman spoke of as affecting other branches. He could not, therefore, name positively a fixed day for the statement to which he referred. He wished he could. He could only state that at the earliest possible opportunity he would bring forward the views of her Majesty's Government with respect to the financial and commercial policy of the country. Even if the hon. Gentleman had been tempted, against his better discretion, to ask for the details to which he had adverted, he should have felt bound to resent the counter-temptation to give an answer. He thought the hon. Gentleman had exercised a wise discretion in resisting the temptation to make the inquiry.

POOR-LAWS.] Mr. *T. Duncombe* did not think his hon. Friend (Mr. Stewart) had much reason to congratulate himself on the explicitness of the answer which he had just received from the right hon. Baronet. He wished to put a question to the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department, on a subject which, unlike the previous one, had not been included in the Speech from the Throne. The House would remember that the Poor-law Commission would cease and determine in July next, and that her Majesty's Government had announced their intention of not introducing any measure to that House, either to continue the Commission, or for the amendment of the Poor-law, until after Easter. Now, such being the case, he hoped her Majesty's Ministers would reconsider their decision on the subject, and bear in mind the extreme inconvenience that must arise from the adoption of such a course as they had announced. One of two things was evidently about to happen. [Cries of "*Order*."] He was perfectly in order; there was a question before the House. What he wished to do was, to point out the inconvenience that was likely to arise from the course which the Government proposed to pursue with regard to this subject—a course that was considered extremely inconvenient and unsatisfactory by the public at large. One of two things was evidently about to happen—either, if the bill was not to be brought in until after Easter, the country would not have sufficient time to consider the provisions of this new Poor-law Act, or the present Government were about to pursue the course that had been pursued during the last two or three years, and they were about to introduce a short bill for the purpose of continuing the commission for another year, and thereby to blink the question of the Poor-law Amendment Act in a manner which would, no doubt, be very convenient to a great number of Members who sat behind Ministers, and also to her Majesty's Government themselves, after the pledges given at the late general election on that subject. Now, what he wished to ask the Government and the right hon. Gentleman to do was, to introduce their bill on this subject, on which the House ought, of course, to have full time for consideration—to introduce that bill before Easter, so that it might lie upon the Table; and further, he should ask them not to proceed with the bill until after Easter, so that the country might, in the meantime, be prepared to consider the provisions and alterations of the Government before the House met again after the Easter recess. He wished also to ask the right hon. Baronet whether in his proposed amendment of the Poor-law he intended to interfere with the Gilbert corporations, or in any way with local acts?

Sir *J. Graham* begged to assure the hon. Gentleman, that in the course which the Government intended to pursue with regard to the introduction of the Poor Law Continuance Bill they would not lose sight of what appeared to them to be the public interest. They had already brought before the House a measure relating to the laws regulating the trade in corn—a measure on which they had had the assurance of his right hon. Friend that the necessity for their coming to a decision was most urgent. Pending the discussion of that measure, it would be useless to introduce any subject so important as that of the continuance of the Poor-law Commission. His right hon. Friend had also announced, that as soon as the forms of the House would allow, by there being a sufficient number of votes in supply to raise the question in the Committee of Ways and

Means as to the financial arrangements of the country, he would with the least possible delay bring under the consideration of the House the financial measures which the Government intended to submit to Parliament. He did not imagine that the discussions that must arise on those propositions could fail to occupy a considerable time, and he thought, therefore, that there was every prospect of their time being fully occupied till the Easter recess. The hon. Member, however, appeared to anticipate that the measure which the Government proposed to introduce after the Easter recess would be in effect a short bill to continue the Poor-law commission for one year, and so to blink the general question of the Poor-laws. Now, he was in a situation to satisfy that hon. Gentleman by a direct assurance that the Government had no such intention,—that it was their intention to bring forward a measure which should not only continue the Poor-law Commission for a time considerably longer than one year, but that in that bill it was also intended to introduce such modifications of the existing law as they, after a full consideration, should think it expedient to submit to Parliament. He could, therefore, give a direct assurance to the hon. Gentleman that the measure which they proposed to introduce would be in itself a full and complete measure. He would further state to the hon. Gentleman, that immediately after the Easter recess it would be his duty to lay the Bill on the table of the House. To do so before the recess he thought would be inexpedient. The hon. Gentleman advised him to lay the Bill on the table before the Easter recess, in order, in fact, that it might be canvassed and made the subject of adverse observation during the recess, without explanations of it, on the other hand, being given. That advice he was not prepared to follow, but immediately after the recess he would lay on the table a full and complete measure. That measure he would be prepared to detail at the right time, and, at the same time, to give the fullest explanation of the intentions of Government with regard to the whole subject.

Mr. *T. Duncombe* said, the right hon. Baronet had not answered his question as to whether the proposed bill would interfere with the Gilbert incorporations or local acts?

Sir *J. Graham* had purposely abstained from answering that which was a question of detail. He declined to enter into such explanations at all, until he should be prepared to state the whole measure.

Mr. *T. Duncombe* had only wished for explanations upon a question which had been put to the noble Lord (J. Russell) during the last session of Parliament, and answered most explicitly by him.

CORN-LAWS — INSPECTORS.] Mr. *Milnes* inquired what was to be done with the class of persons called Corn Inspectors? He heard that they were in a state of great doubt and difficulty, not knowing whether they would not be deprived of their situations under the operation of the new system.

Sir *R. Peel* had received many letters on the subject, which were under consideration. It was not now quite convenient to answer the question, and he would state his intentions on the subject when bringing in the bill.

CORN-LAWS—FLOUR.] Mr. *Hutt* inquired whether the right hon. Baronet meant to preserve, under the new plan, the same relative proportions in regard to the fixing of the duties on foreign wheat and flour that existed under the old?

Sir *R. Peel* said, that he felt the great inconvenience of answering particular questions of detail in this way. He would rather wait until he was able to state generally his whole views on bringing in the bill. He would at the same time make a similar statement with regard to barley, oats, and other kinds of grain.

DEATH FOR KILLING A GOAT (IRELAND).] Lord *Eliot* begged to explain that he had been misinformed as to the fact that the man sentenced to death for killing a goat had been immediately liberated. On the Irish Government communicating with the assistant barrister, it appeared that the act in question was committed under very aggravated circumstances; that it was not the man's first offence; that it had been committed from wilful malice; and that, under those circumstances, it had not been thought fit immediately to liberate him, but his punishment had been commuted to twelve months' imprisonment. The matter was not of much importance, but he was anxious, at all times, to be particular as to the correctness of any information he might give to the House.

CORN LAWS—BURDENS ON LAND.] Mr. *Cobden* said, that the right hon. Baronet in his speech introducing his measure on the Corn-laws, had spoken of certain exclusive burdens borne by land, which he considered formed a ground for proposing to levy a tax upon food for the benefit of a particular class. He wished to ask the right hon. Baronet whether he was prepared to lay before the House a specification of those particular burdens, for he thought it would be more satisfactory to the country to have the facts before they entered upon the present discussion? He would put the question to the right hon. Baronet, whether he was prepared to submit to the House, before going into Committee, a specification of those particular burdens which he thought pressed upon the landed interest.

Sir *R. Peel* said, the question of the hon. Gentleman involved a matter that was the subject of much controversy. The greatest political economists differed much as to what were and what were not burdens on the landed interest. Adam Smith thought tithes a burden on land, and Mr. M'Culloch was of the same opinion, but other writers on those subjects entertained different opinions. The noble Lord opposite had in his speech the other night come to the conclusion that there were particular burdens on the land which justified him in proposing a fixed duty. The subject was one for discussion to grow out of reasoning and examination of the facts; and he was sure the hon. Gentleman would see that it would be impossible for him to lay upon the table, in any official form, the information which he required.

Mr. *Cobden* said, the right hon. Baronet could explain his own opinion on the subject.

Sir *R. Peel* submitted to the hon. Member that it was usual to deliver opinions in speeches, and that it was quite unusual for any hon. Member to lay on the Table any official statement of his opinions.

Mr. *Ewart* asked whether the right hon. Baronet had any objection to state what were the real burdens borne by land, that the public might know whether they had any real claim to protection and compensation.

Sir *R. Peel* said, his answer was, that he proposed to remit the duties on foreign corn from 22*s.* to 10*s.*, and he hoped the hon. Gentleman would unite with him in passing the measure into a law as speedily as possible.

Subject at an end.

THE CHURCH IN WALES.] Mr. W. *Stanley* begged to know if it was the intention of the Government to introduce any measure this Session respecting the sinecure rectories and chapter establishments in North Wales; also if it was their intention to carry into effect the recommendation of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for uniting the two sees of Bangor and St. Asaph, or the suppression of either of them?

Sir *R. Peel* felt himself obliged to postpone giving a definite answer to the question to a later period of the Session. His impression was, that legislation upon the subject was required, but he could not undertake to say, in the multiplicity of business already occupying the attention of the Government, at what particular part of the Session they would be ready to make any proposition to the House upon it.

Subject at an end.

REGISTRATION OF COPYRIGHT.] Mr. *Godson* moved the second reading of the Copyright Registration Bill. The hon. Member stated, that he did not mean to hurry the Bill through the House, and if the House would then consent to read the Bill a second time, he would propose not to commit it till after Easter, and that the discussion on its principle should be taken on going into committee.

Mr. *Jervis* on the understanding that the House was not thereby pledged to the principle of the measure, would consent to the second reading.

Bill read a second time.

To be committed after Easter.

CORN LAWS—THE TOTAL REPEAL—ADJOURNED DEBATE.] The House resolved itself into a committee on the Corn-law Acts. The debate was resumed by

Mr. *Hardy*, who said, that when addressing his constituents, previous to the late general election, he had expressed his desire to see a modification of the present scale of duties upon the importation of foreign corn, and, singularly enough, that the maximum duty should be that which the right hon. Baronet had proposed, 20*s.* He also, however, stated that he was anxious that it should begin at a lower point than that from which the right hon. Baronet started. He was favourable to the imposition of a duty, not merely for the purpose of benefitting or protecting the agricultural interest, but because he was convinced it was necessary for the general welfare of the country itself. He was favourable to it for the same reason that he was favourable to a duty upon foreign manufactured goods, a duty which was imposed not for the benefit exclusively of home manufacturers, but for the benefit of the country at large, by giving a stimulus to domestic industry, capital, and skill. In the same light exactly did he regard the imposition of a duty on foreign corn, and to the same general advantages did he conceive its operation tended. The duty on foreign corn was no more intended for the benefit of any particular class or district than was that upon foreign manufactured goods intended for the benefit of Manchester and Leeds. Special benefit was no doubt derived from each of those duties, but he contended that each was likewise productive of benefit to the country at large, by preventing us from becoming altogether, or in a great part, dependent upon foreign countries. In a document which had been issued by the Anti-Corn-law delegates, from the Crown and Anchor Tavern, he found it asserted, that the present Corn-laws in their operation not only exposed the labouring class to the physical evils of hunger, disease, and even premature death, but warred against their eternal interests by increasing the temptations to crime and immorality, rendering them less accessible to the influences of religion; that in denouncing the corn and provision laws as a great national sin, the deputies express their own deliberate conviction, and that of a vast portion of their countrymen, that those laws should be immediately and totally abolished; and the deputies constituting the meeting "pledge themselves never to swerve or relax in their efforts until that object be accomplished." Now, if those laws produced the dire effects here stated, it seemed to him most extraordinary that what was called a liberal administration should, during a period of ten years, have never made a single attempt to alter or abrogate them, although they promised and professed to do more for the relief of the labouring classes than any Administration that had preceded them. During Lord Grey's Administration no alteration of any kind was suggested or proposed, and nothing was done either during the Administration of Lord Melbourne, until its light began to flicker in the socket, when a fixed duty of 8*s.* was proposed, with the evident object of exciting public favour and attention in behalf of those who proposed it. That was the first attempt that had been made to alter those laws, which, according to the new parliament sitting in the Crown and Anchor, had been productive of the most pernicious effects upon the people in a moral as well as physical point of view. The document he referred to went on to say,

> "That the deputies present connected with the staple manufactures of the country, whilst they demand the removal of all restrictions upon the importation of corn and provisions, declare their willingness to aid in the abolition of all duties imposed for their own protection."

It might be very well to put forth such a statement as that, after clamouring for a repeal of the corn laws, but he believed it was the first time the country had heard of such a willingness on the part of the manufacturers. [" *No.*"] There was no statement to that effect in the petition from Manchester; he had seen nothing like it in any petition that had been presented to that House; and he confessed that he placed but little reliance on it as an indication of fair play. If it had been intended to deal fairly by every interest concerned, those who called for a repeal of the duties upon corn would have taken the preliminary step of calling for the removal of those protective duties from which they derived special benefit, but which, as he contended, were beneficial to the country at large. Who, let him ask, constituted the Legislature at the time when the laws which regulated the importation of foreign goods were passed? Why, the landowners of the country. Yes, the landowners of the country, who had an interest in getting every description of manufactured goods at a cheap rate, passed those very laws which gave protection to the manufacturers. On the other hand, he was sorry to be obliged to say, that if, when the question of foreign corn was before the House, the Legislature had happened to have been composed of manufacturers and not of landowners, he very much feared, while providing for their own protection, they would have allowed the landed interest to take care of itself. The noble Lord, the Member for London, in speaking of the proposed plan, said, that it rested upon the same principle, and would be attended with the same results, as the present system. That it was founded on the same principle he (Mr. Hardy) admitted, but that it would be the same in its results he totally denied. The proposed scale of duties was a considerable relaxation of the existing scale, and would differ in its results as surely as a fixed duty of 4*s.* would differ in its operation from a fixed duty of 8*s.* With regard to the present mode of striking the averages, he had always objected to it; but he could not but be of opinion that the alterations proposed by the right hon. Baronet would make a great amendment in the system. The hon. Member for Wolverhampton had spoken of this measure as a protection to land, and not a protection to labour; but protection to land was a protection to the labour on the land, just as a protection to manufactures was a protection to the labour of the artisan. But, after all, what was the immense protection given to the land? Where was the estate that paid more than 2½ per cent. on the money laid out on it—a sum which was very small indeed in proportion to the returns on protected manufactures? He did not deny that there were greater risks run by those engaged in manufactures; but when hon. Gentlemen talked of the outlay on land as arising solely in consequence of the protection afforded to it, he would really ask them to consider if there must not be some other cause for making such investments than that of any expected gain arising from such protection. The same hon. Gentleman he had already alluded to had been very liberal in his quotations from Mr. Huskisson. It would be found, however, that that statesman's arguments did not always bear out the view the repealers had chosen to attribute to them. In one speech Mr. Huskisson had made, he had said:—

> "The history of the country for the last 170 years clearly proves—on the one hand, that cheapness produced by foreign import is the sure forerunner of scarcity—and, on the other, that a steady home supply is the only foundation of safe and moderate prices. I admit that if unlimited foreign import, which the war had suspended, were now again allowed, then bread might be a little, though a very little, cheaper than it now is, for a year or two. But what would follow? The small farmer would be ruined; improvements would every where stand still; inferior lands now producing corn would be given up, and return to a state of waste. The home consumption and brisk demand for all the numerous articles of the retail trade, which has so much contributed, even during the pressure of war, to the prosperity of our towns (especially of those which are not connected with manufactures or foreign commerce), would rapidly decline—farming servants, and all the trades which depend on agriculture for employment, would be thrown out of work, and the necessary result of the want of work would be, that wages would fall even more rapidly than the price of bread. Then comes some interruption to the foreign import, coinciding with the decay of agriculture at home, and corn as suddenly forced up again to a famine price. To protect the small farmer, therefore, at this moment is ultimately to protect the people."

This was, he thought, a pretty convincing proof that Mr. Huskisson was not always, as the hon. Gentleman would make the House believe, an advocate for a total and immediate repeal. With regard to the depression existing at Manchester, and other places, he did not deny its existence, but, on the contrary, in common with the House generally, he deplored the distress which such a bad state of trade entailed. But when he heard of mills being thrown out of work solely in consequence of the operation of the Corn-law, let him ask one simple question, and that was, when those mills were first erected? If they were built after the Corn-law came into operation, surely the bad state of trade could not be imputed to that law—surely it could not be said, that the enactment under which they sprung up was the cause of the disasters which attended their career? The hon. Member for Salford, in replying to his Friend, the Member for Knaresborough, had said, although he was not a man of very great fortune, yet he had got enough for himself. Now he (Mr. Hardy) should like to know, under what system the hon. Member had amassed his wealth? If it was under the Corn-law, he heartily congratulated the hon. Member on making a fortune by trade when a law was in operation, which he said to be destructive of all commercial enterprise. The fact he believed was, that scarcely an instance of prosperity could be adduced which did not exist in as high, if not in a higher, degree at the present time than before the Corn-law came into operation. In spite of that law, destructive as they termed it, the manufacturers thrived and prospered, until the effects of their own extreme competition damaged the markets for their own productions. He could not, therefore, reconcile the arguments of the manufacturers with the results of their own practice. He admitted, that it was to be deplored that corn should be dearer than we could wish it to be, looking at the depressed state of our artisans, and the low rate of their wages, but he denied most emphatically that that low rate of wages was caused by the operation of the existing Corn-law. On the contrary, he held it to be entirely attributable to over-speculation. They had built more mills, and thrown more goods on the market, than had been demanded, and the consequences had been low prices, and a low rate of wages. He had the authority of the hon. Member for Oldham for this view of the case. The hon. Gentleman had made a calculation, that certain articles in the cotton manufacture, which formerly fetched 96*s*., in wages now only brought 28*s*. The result, at any rate, could not follow from the operation of the law, because the Corn-law existed when the amount of articles alluded to was 96*s*. The hon. Member for Sheffield had, the other night, imputed to Gentlemen on that side of the House a description of conduct which he might almost term scandalous. He had said, that they came there to consult, only their own interest. He admitted, that the remark was made with temper, but, though not angrily said, it was earnestly enforced. Now, he could safely say for himself, and for many other Members who held the same opinions with him, that they had no personal interest whatever in supporting the protection of domestic agriculture. For his own part, he had never sold a quarter of corn in his life. As a manufacturer, he employed from 2,000 to 3,000 operatives and labourers in his works, and he could honestly say, that he should be glad to see every one of them able to obtain bread at the cheapest possible rate. He should not, however, be glad to see them get it at any sacrifice to the interests of the nation. He should not be glad that they obtained it at any cost to the rest of the community, or at the risk of scarcity of supply in years of dearth, consequent upon the failure of our foreign imports, and the reduction of the home produce. The hon. Member for Westminster, who had spoken the other night, had asked, how the manufacturers on the Ministerial side of the House had liked the allusions of his right hon. Friend, the Member for Knaresborough. He was quite ready to give an answer to that question. They did not feel, that the castigation applied to themselves. They had raised no agitation. They had not sent hired lecturers to raise a tumult from one end of the country to the other. They had not used the pulpit, that "drum ecclesiastic," to beat up for recruits to the cause. "Let the galled jades wince." They, for their parts, would be ashamed of such conduct. They would be ashamed to have made use of such means as had been used to get up petitions to that House. If the people had been left to themselves, if they had not been unduly and improperly excited, if their minds had not been poisoned by the false doctrine disseminated throughout the country, they would have been as tranquil now as they were last summer, when the pressure was, to say the least of it, quite as great. He would direct the attention of the House to the difference between the number of petitions presented at that time, and the number now before the House. Up to the last report of the Petitions' Committee, 400,000 persons had petitioned Parliament for the repeal of the Corn-law during the present Session. Now, no doubt the petitions of those persons were entitled to be treated with every respect; but he would ask, did those 400,000 constitute the whole population of the manufacturing districts? If they did not, so much importance certainly could not be attached to them, and it became clear that some, at least, of the manufacturers did not attribute all the evils they laboured under to the operation of the Corn Act. Yet, looking at the language and the means employed to excite the public mind, it was, he must confess, astonishing to him that, great as the number of petitions were, it had not already become still greater. He would take the liberty of reading to the House a resolution moved and passed "at an adjourned meeting of the Anti-Corn-law delegates, held at Brown's-hotel, Palace-yard, at half-past seven o'clock in the evening," on which the right hon. Baronet, at the head of the Government, made his exposition, as this was after dinner, the House might, perhaps, account for, though it would not excuse, the tone of the resolution, which ran as follows :—

> "Resolved, that in the opinion of this meeting, the measure just announced by her Majesty's Government on the subject of the Corn-law, so far from holding out the slightest prospect of any relief"

Was that, he would ask, true?

> "To the distress of the country, is an insult to a patient and suffering people; and the deputies view such a proposal as an indication that the landed aristocracy of this country are destitute of all sympathy for the poor, and are resolved, if permitted by an outraged people, to persist in a course of selfish policy which will involve the destruction of every interest in the country."

That was the sort of language used by the deputies, as they styled themselves. He was sorry such language was not confined to persons without the doors of that House. He regretted, to have heard the hon. Member for Coventry, the other night, reminding the House of the fate of the French aristocracy. He was sorry to hear the hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets say, that by-and-by—he believed he said "ere long" —there would be a rush on the aristocracy of the country that would not only sweep away the Corn-law, but other established orders along with it. That was, he contended, a dangerous sort of language to use. It was a language that might be used for other purposes than it had been used for, and perhaps with quite as great success. It was a language which appealed to the passions of the ignorant, without appealing to the understandings of any, and by the use of which he would undertake to get up quite as great a sensation on other subjects as had been got up upon this. He believed, if he sent half the number of lecturers and paid agents through the country to get signatures to petitions for an increase of wages, he would soon find 800,000 petitioners instead of 400,000. But that was not the sort of language in which the people should approach the House, much less was it the sort of language that should be used in the House. There were already, unfortunately, too many persons in the country ready to take advantage of excitements and tumults; there were too many abroad who had the maxims of Cato on their lips, and the spirit of Cataline in their hearts, and to whom discreet people ought to be careful how they gave encouragement. He hoped, however, that such language and such methods of agitation would not deter the Ministers from doing their duty. He trusted, they would treat such conduct with the contempt it deserved, and that the right hon. Baronet, the Member for Tamworth, would go on in the spirit of the policy enunciated in his address to his constituents in 1834, a policy which, if conscientiously followed, would secure for him a large share of the gratitude of the people, if it did not obtain for him all that he would deserve. As for the angry agitators, let them burn him in effigy if they pleased; he would not care for such ebullitions of disappointed spleen. He would remember, that the *vox populi* was to-day a cry of execration, and to-morrow a shout of honour and applause; and, paying little attention to it, he would pursue a steady unflinching course of action, tending to his own renown, and to his country's benefit.

Colonel *Fox* would not have obtruded himself on the House when so many Members were anxious to address it, had he not felt it incumbent on him, representing as he did so important a constituency, to explain the course which he intended to pursue that night. His constituents fully concurred in the motion of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, and he must say for himself, that, with the exception of one little word, he also concurred in the spirit and object of that motion. He frankly owned that he was inclined to vote for a total repeal of the Corn-laws, but he could not think that that total repeal ought to take place "now." He should be glad to concur in any modification of the scheme. He would support a fixed duty of 8*s*., gradually reducing itself year by year, at the rate of 1*s*., or even of 2*s*., until no duty remained, but he could not but hold that it would be injurious to go from one extreme to the other—from the present scale of duties to an immediate and total repeal of all duties whatsoever. Holding these opinions, he should take that night a course which he was by no means willing to take, because he was always anxious to record his vote when a proposition was before the House, but nevertheless, looking at the question as it now stood, and anxious as he was for a total repeal which should not damage existing interests by being immediate, he thought he should best consult his own feelings by absenting himself from the division.

Mr. *H. Lindsay* was prepared to give a negative to the motion of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, and to adopt in preference the measure of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth. The House had lately heard much of class legislation, but if he could conceive of class legislation in its worst and most objectionable form, it would be as embodied in the resolution of the hon. Member. That hon. Gentleman within the House, and those beyond its walls who supported his view of the subject, announced that their object was to inflict injury on the agricultural interest. Were they not told that the landed aristocracy were the oppressors of the people, who had for a long time past enjoyed advantages of which they ought to be deprived? Was not that argument often employed both in and out of the House? He should vote against the proposition, believing that were the House to entertain it, it would be injurious to the agricultural, and not beneficial to the manufacturing interest. As to a fixed duty, that would, in his opinion, be merely nugatory. Mr. Hubbard, in his pamphlet, recommended that power to take off the duty when corn rose to a high price should be entrusted to the executive Government. Was it not evident that when the country was in difficulties there would always be an outcry against a fixed duty? On the other hand, suppose that the duty was made to cease when the price of corn rose to 74*s*., could the House imagine that any greater stimulus could be given to the gambling speculations of the Stock Exchange, which were supposed to have done so much injury under the present system? So that, on one supposition, they would be holding out a temptation to popular agitation; on the other, they would be playing the game of the speculators. As well might a comet be called a fixed star, as the proposition of the noble Lord the Member for London a fixed duty. He wished to advert for a moment to an argument employed in the debate of the former evening by the hon. and gallant Member for Marylebone (Sir C. Napier). The gallant Commodore had stated, that under the plan of Ministers it would take two months to import corn from America, and he (Mr. H. Lindsay) agreed in the correctness of the observation. Suppose an order for grain to be sent to America at the beginning of a month, and to reach New York by the middle of it, more than one month must elapse, under ordinary circumstances, before they could expect any to arrive in England. That circumstance would make it unsafe to speculate in the article. He would suggest, therefore, in order to meet this difficulty, that the merchant receiving the order for the supply of corn, should be allowed to enter the cargo at the port of exportation, at his option, or at the port of import, and that the duty might be paid at the rate leviable for the day on which the grain should be shipped to England, or the day of its arrival. Supposing the duty to rise in the interval taken up by the voyage, there might be a loss to the revenue, but there would be an increased gain to the importer; supposing it to fall, the revenue would gain, though the importer might lose. He thought this would be likely to give greater certainty to the trade, and offer an inducement to the Americans to embark in it. He threw out this suggestion in the hope that it would receive the consideration of the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government. For himself he would say, that he felt the strongest desire for the prosperity of British commerce; whatever he possessed in life he owed to that commerce, and all his interests were bound up with it. He never considered any question connected with commerce as one of party; but one thing he would not do. There were higher interests in Great Britain than even those of her commerce and manufactures; and he never would consent to inflict an injury on British agriculture, thereby hoping to benefit British commerce.

Mr. *B. Layard* considered the immediate repeal of the Corn-laws would be an hazardous experiment, and he could not think that it would add to the prosperity of the country. He could not, however, support the measure brought forward by the right hon. Baronet opposite, and therefore, in this instance, it was not his intention to vote. He was most anxious that a fixed duty should be carried, because he thought it would give stability to agriculture, and lighten the burden of taxation. It was pretended on the other side that the burdens imposed on agriculture were immense, and heavier than those affecting any other interest. The land-tax was the only impost borne by agriculture exclusively, and therefore it would be interesting to compare its amount, and the proportion it bore to the remaining sources of taxation in this and in other countries. Here the land-tax produced 1,189,585*l.*, and other taxes 51,997,000*l.* In France the land-tax produced 23,250,000*l.*, and other taxes 17,500,000*l.* In Prussia the land-tax brought 3,994,000*l*; other taxes 3,667,000*l.* In Austria the land-tax amounted to 8,995,000*l.*, and other taxes to 7,700,000*l.* How, then, could the land-tax be described as a great burden to the landed interest, when in Britain it was infinitely lighter than in any other European country? Again, let the enormous increase in the value of the landed rental of the kingdom be considered. From 1690 to 1696 it was computed at 6,500,000*l.*; in 1841 it amounted to 200,000,000*l.* From 1810 to 1830, 1,058 bills for enclosing land were passed; and from the beginning of the reign of George III. to 1834, 6,840,540 acres were enclosed, which clearly showed that however the landowners might complain of land-tax or poor-rates, they had taken good care of their own interests. It had always been the fashion in this country to try to make the people believe that the land paid for all. In one part of Staffordshire he had remarked some years ago a sign, on which the King was represented in his robes, and a scroll issuing from his mouth with the words—"I govern all;" below him was the Archbishop of Canterbury in his pall, with the words "I pray for all;" next came a figure in a field marshal's uniform, with the words "I fight for all;" and last was a man clad in a smock frock, supported on his right hand and left by a plough and harrow, who was good enough to inform the spectator that he paid for all. Now he differed from the last assertion. The landed interest did not pay more than their due share of the public burdens; he should say on the contrary, that instead of paying for all, all paid for them. He believed that the beggars in the street paid more than their proportion of taxation, for the benefit of those who were placed by the bounty of Providence in the enviable situation of landed proprietors. By an Act of Parliament, passed in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, any soldier or marine who was found begging in the streets was liable to be punished by death; that law had been repealed as a disgrace to our legislation; but he believed that a law which restricted the food of the people was no less cruel, unwise, and unjust. He was not disposed to tax the landed interest with selfish or avaricious motives—he thought that they were merely mistaken in their opinions. He did not tax the landed interest with selfishness or cruelty, for he knew none who were more ready to succour distress than the landed proprietor; but though he would not tax them with injustice or avarice, yet he did tax them with ignorance. Blessed by a bountiful Providence with all the luxuries of life, they were not aware of the misery and want endured by many of their countrymen, and happy should he have been if hon. Members opposite had employed the time which was taken up to so little purpose by the right hon. Member for Tamworth in following the example of the noble Lord the Member for Newark (Lord J. Manners), whose conduct in making himself acquainted with the condition of his suffering countrymen, and bearing testimony to their wants, did honour to his head and heart. Had hon. Members visited Birmingham, Manchester, Paisley, and Liverpool, they would themselves have witnessed and been able to speak of it. If they had gone to Liverpool, perhaps they would have been induced to cross the water, and visit a country which the right hon. Baronet said he expected would present the chief difficulty to him in the execution of his task. Had they visited the hut of the Irish peasant, they would have seen a degree of misery of which he had not the slightest conception until he had resided in Ireland. They would have also seen that misery and want borne with a patience, fortitude, and resignation which, if they had been equalled, had never been surpassed. He should be told that as Ireland was an agricultural country, to alter the Corn-laws would be its ruin. He denied it. A sliding scale might be injurious, but a fixed duty would be a boon to it. One word to those hon. Gentlemen who meant to support the motion of the hon. Member for North Lincoln. They were acting like the dog in the fable, deceived by the shadow; and they were very likely to meet with the same reward. It was high time for them to put their house in order; there was a hand-writing on the wall; and, as far as he was able to see, the monopoly was departing from them. To those who held places of power and responsibility he would say that they had thrown away a golden opportunity of doing good. They might have fed the hungry and clothed the naked, and they would have reaped the best reward that honest statesmen could have—in the prosperity and happiness of their country. But they had been carried away by an unwise view of their interest, and had determined to lend their support to this monopoly. He would warn them that the time was fast approaching when they would be obliged to grant to the remonstrances of the people what they had refused to their petitions.

Mr. *Smythe* had no doubt, as was alleged by some, that free-trade in corn would benefit both the revenue and the consumer. If they put corn on the same footing as tobacco, if they discouraged or prohibited its culture in England, the consumer would benefit greatly, and so would the revenue. But what, in that case, would become of the agriculturists? Were they prepared to sacrifice one-third of the population—he was taking Mr. Babbage's calculation—to the other two-thirds? Such might be the scheme of a Minister of a party; such ought not to be the scheme of a Minister of a nation; such was not the plan of the right hon. Baronet. He was pledged, so to speak, to the compatibility of these two great interests, whose prosperity was essentially inter-dependent; and while, by this measure, he told them, that one had been unduly and unjustly protected, he was prepared to abate that protection, but to do so by a gradual, safe, and moderate reformation. This, hon. Members opposite had objected to. But the same, or an analogous course, followed in other countries, such as the gradual modification of the law of Joseph 2nd, and Marie Therese, in relation to manufactures in Austria, was stated by Mr. Macgregor, in his evidence before the Import Duties Committee, not only without reprobation, but as an example to be imitated. It was, in his estimation, one of the best proofs of the merit of this measure, that it had enlisted against it the extremes of both parties. He would remind those who stickled for extreme protection, that 1802, 1803, and 1804, were years of marked agricultural improvement, when the average price of wheat was only 61*s*., and taking into consideration the comparative cheapness of labour since that period, the improvements in agriculture, and the reduction of taxation which pressed upon the land, surely, wheat could be raised on the same soils now, at less expense. But he would put it upon kindlier grounds; he would call upon them to remember how much they owed of the present magnificence, of the splendour and power to which this country had arrived, to the prosperity of her manufactures. He would warn those who were inclined to listen to the counsels of the hon. Member for Knaresborough—he would warn these Gentlemen that they should be the last to enter upon Quixotic or useless aggression—Quixotic, because full of the same eccentric and spurious humanity, the same perverted and ostentatious benevolence. These were not the times to reject God's gifts. Let them appreciate the great boon and blessing of machinery without which Manchester would have been as Woodstock, Liverpool a fishing village on the Mersey, and their rent-rolls comparatively insignificant. Let them take warning by the fate of imperial Augsburg; while its manufactures prospered, the rent of the adjacent land was ten times as great as it had been since. He confessed, that on an impartial historical review of this question, he had come to the conclusion, that but four Ministers had dealt with this subject in the spirit (he was not speaking of details) which England had a right to expect—Lord North, in 1773; Mr. Canning, in 1827; the noble Lord, in his measure of last year; and the right hon. Baronet, in the plan now under consideration. He was free to own, that whether introduced by the noble Lord or the right hon. Baronet, he was glad to see that principle of undue and unjust protection which began in 1688, beneath which so much bad land had been broken up; beneath which our commerce had been so cruelly constrained and crippled; beneath which such vast fortunes had been made with so little labour, and so little merit, was now, with another principle originated at the same time, with another ascendancy as anomalous and as pernicious, universally condemned, and beginning to crumble and totter to their common fall. It might be asked, why he used, on this topic, the language of exultation. His answer was, that he represented the interests of 16,000 consumers. Accompanied by his noble Friend near him (Lord J. Manners) he had seen the deep and extensive distress which prevailed in parts of the country, and he knew with what gratitude even a small boon would be received by a suffering people. He remembered, that in the debate on the sugar duties, the right hon. Baronet, in the first speech he had the good fortune to hear from him in that House, described, with that eloquence which with him was an instinct, the calamitous condition consequent on the decay of the Decca trade of India. This had become translated into England. It had become a household thing It was around us and about us. But there was this difference—in the one case, the effect had been natural and consistent—in the other it was unnatural and inconsistent. It was but meet and fitting, it was only in accordance with necessity, that the soft and spiritless Hindoo should believe, that the nation which had conquered him in arms should also conquer him in arts. The genius of our Watts and Arkwrights was to him but a reflection of the genius of our Hastingses and Clives. But with our own unmatched, unrivalled artisans the case was far different. Surely, it was a sad and melancholy thing, when the Prime Minister was obliged to come down and tell them that the distress was owing to over-production—that was, to over-industry; to over-accommodation—that was, to over-enterprise. Thus it was their own genius, their own science, their own talents, their own skill, with which they were taunted and reproached—

> " ———Nec lex est equior ulla
> Quam necis artifices arte perire suâ."

But such legislation, so unnatural, so unwise, so unjust, so bad, could not be perpetrated. He hailed this measure as a first instalment of a change—of a wiser and more thoughtful policy—as an earnest, that the proportions of our monster tariff, were to be reduced at last to something like seemliness and shape. He cherished this hope, from the spirit of the resolutions laid on the Table, by the right hon. Vice-President of the Board of Trade, from the reply of the right hon. Baronet to the Member for Manchester, about the provision laws, nay, from this very reserve itself, that the right hon. Baronet would not inflict the calamity of direct taxation on the suffering operatives of England, who had borne their calamities with the most virtuous patience and most touching resignation. It was observed by Mr. Dryden, that he had heard of many virtuous persons ending unfortunately, but never of any virtuous nation; Providence, he said, was engaged too deeply, when the cause was so general. It was on these grounds, he cherished the hopes which he had ventured to express. If the right hon. Baronet did fulfil them, he would have done so without having mooted subjects of irritation and agitation—without appealing to the passions or prejudices of the people—without arraying class against class, or interest against interest—" having sought" in the words of a Stuart King, " rather to rule for the common weal, than the common will;" and he would receive his reward in the universal gratitude of a relieved, free, and contented population.

Mr. *Macaulay:* I have listened, Sir, with much pleasure to the speech of the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down; but, I must say, bearing in mind the taunts so generally urged on the ground of diversity of opinion against this side of the House, he could not have made a more unfortunate selection of topics to prove the unanimity on his. If the hon. Gentleman gives their due weight to the arguments which he has advanced in making up his own judgment, he will, I should think, be very loth to divide with those on whose side he now sits. For myself, Sir, I may perhaps be permitted to say, that as I never on any former occasion addressed the House on this subject, I feel exceedingly desirous not to be misunderstood in taking the course which I am persuaded my duty points out. I think I also owe this declaration of my opinion to the constituent body which I represent, and who, having formed a decided opinion on this subject, having imposed on me the responsibility of giving it my fullest consideration, and, if possible, my zealous sanction. I may be permitted, perhaps, to say, that no constituent body in this empire is entitled, on this subject, to a more favourable hearing. There is, perhaps, no constituency consisting of 120,000 or 130,000 persons who can be considered as standing so much in the situation of an impartial judge. We have heard—and I have heard with great pain —the imputations and charges dealt out against the great community engaged in commerce and manufactures. Against the community which I represent, all those abusive epithets and vituperative attacks which have been so freely indulged in, fall pointless. They inhabit a city, the capital of a distinct country having no foreign trade and no manufactures, supported principally by those connected with the administration of the law, by those frequenting its university, or those who are brought thither by its literature and by the attractions of its society. It is beside the resort of the gentry of the country, who assembled there at certain stated seasons of the year. I believe it would be found difficult to find many constituencies of an equal extent of whom it might be so truly said that in this matter they have no interest except the common weal of the empire. Their interest is that common to all—it is the interest of the consumer. And I can fairly say, that I believe the people of Edinburgh have a feeling so strong on this subject that I have reason to apprehend their disapproval rather than their approval—that they will not at all events be quite satisfied with my conduct in not feeling myself at liberty to support the motion of my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton. With that motion, I must say, notwithstanding, that I agree in principle. To the principle of the right hon. Baronet I am decidedly opposed. It is, I think, fundamentally erroneous. I understand the right hon. Baronet to ground his measure on this principle—and if I be wrong, he will set me right—that the cheapness of the necessaries of life is not uniformly or necessarily a benefit to a people. [" *No, no.*"] That doctrine the right hon. Baronet laid down in a most distinct manner when he introduced his plan to the House. He said I should be deluding the people if I held out to them the hope that they can expect any real relief to their distresses from this or any such measure. He said, it is a mistake to suppose that cheapness in the price of food is necessarily connected with the promotion of general prosperity. Now, if the right hon, Baronet is wrong, I must think that he has attempted to found his measure on a false principle. He distinctly disclaimed—I mention it to his honour—all intention of giving an exclusive benefit to any class. From him we heard no talk of the necessity, on constitutional grounds, of pampering a great aristocracy and enabling them to hold a certain pre-eminent position in the state. All these doctrines were not only abandoned by the right hon. Gentleman, but I understood that he specially disclaimed them, and that he rested his proposal on the ground that it would promote the general prosperity. If then the right hon. Gentleman be not right as to the principle on which his measure is founded, if it be a fact that cheapness of food is a blessing to a people, then I am justified in saying that the measure of the right hon. Gentleman is not defensible on its very fundamental principle. It has often happened that the doctrines of the political economists have run counter to the prejudices of mankind, but in this case their view is confirmed by the general opinion of the earliest ages, and by the universal admission of every nation at the present time, that the cheapness of the first necessaries of life is a blessing. So strong has this feeling been, so deeply rooted, that it has been found to prevail in all countries and in all ages. I shall not refer to the Hebrew scripture as some have done, not very judiciously I think, for the purpose of proving this question of the Corn-laws to be a religious one; but every one acquainted with our oldest and most authorative histories must be aware that they contain the clearest proof that in remote times, and down to our own times—and no one is better qualified by classical knowledge to furnish instances of the fact from the histories of Greece and Rome than the right hon. Baronet himself—that principle which requires, one would think, only to be enunciated to carry conviction, was acknowledged, that to obtain the necessaries of life at a cheap price must be a great blessing. When you suppose that a man has but 40*l.* a year for the support of himself, his wife, and children, it appears monstrous to argue that an extra outlay of 8*l.* per year, for corn, being a pound a year on each of the eight quarters required for the sustenance of his family, is not a matter in which he is deeply interested. I am now only putting the *prima facie* case. How is it met by the Government? Why, the right hon. Gentleman declares against the universal sense of all ages and nations, that cheapness of food is not necessarily a benefit to a people. His argument, if I rightly understood it, was simply this—there are countries where food is cheap, and the people are not so well off as the people of England, and the countries which he particularly cited were Prussia and Belgium. If the right hon. Gentleman used any other argument on this head, it escaped my attention. Now, Sir, is that argument absolutely worth anything—is it even a plausible argument. If, indeed, any person were so egregiously absurd as to argue that cheapness of food is the sole cause of national prosperity, and that trade and manufactures, and a long course of successful events, have nothing to do with it, I could understand the exposure of the fallacy which pointed out other countries where the necessaries of life were extremely cheap, but the condition of the people not proportionably benefited. But all we have argued is, that cheapness of food is a blessing to a nation, exactly in the same sense as health is a blessing to an individual. Of course a man in excellent bodily health may, from family afflictions and pecuniary difficulties, or a stain upon his character, be, on the whole, worse off than the invalid; but that does not shake the truth of the principle that health is good for man, that the healthy man would not be better off than the valetudinarian, if his circumstances were flourishing, or that the misery of the man in health would not be aggravated by having the additional affliction of ill health. The right hon. Baronet's argument goes to prove that there is no such thing as a blessing vouchsafed by Providence to man. Fertility of soil even cannot, with his views, be considered a blessing to a country. Suppose we possessed the power by legislative enactment, which we do not, of making the barren moors and mountain tops of Scotland as fertile as the vale of Taunton, the right hon. Baronet, upon his principle, would be bound to tell us it was our duty to abstain from doing so. He would tell us to look at the state of Scotland and of Bengal—Bengal, a country so fertile, that they had regularly three harvests every year, and yet where the labourer cannot enjoy from his earnings one half the luxuries and comforts that are enjoyed by the Scottish peasant. The right hon. Baronet, pointing to the fertility of Bengal, and the state of the labourer there, would say that it is their duty to abstain from the endeavours to make Scotland as fertile as Bengal. In considering this question the right hon. Baronet has kept out of view all those modifying circumstances to which he was bound to have paid attention before instituting the comparison—circumstances all-important in the consideration of such a question. The right hon. Baronet's argument consists in leaving entirely out of the question the important considerations of good government, the security of property, internal order, the immense mass of our machinery, the existence of civil and religious liberty, our insular situation, our great mines of iron in the vicinity of our coal mines, and disregarding all these ingredients in a nation's prosperity, he sets up his declaration against the general sense of mankind in all ages and in all nations. There is one single point in the comparison between England and Prussia instituted by the right hon. Baronet, to which, on account of its importance, I will direct the attention of the committee, which has been wholly passed over by the right hon. Baronet; that is, our insular position, and our maritime supremacy, which is the consequence of that position. We have never within the memory of any one living seen an enemy in this country. Our fathers never saw such a thing. With the exception of the march of the Highland clans to Derby in the years 1745 and 1746, they must go back for centuries to find the time when Englishmen had seen a foreign enemy in this country.—Can the like be said of Prussia? In the memory of men now living, fifty pitched battles have been fought within her territory, and in one province 13,000 houses have been laid in ashes by the inroads of foreign enemies. Is it to be wondered at, after such scenes, that the peasant of Prussia is not as well off as the peasant of England; or can the inferiority of his condition be converted into a proof that cheap bread is no blessing to a people? If the right hon. Baronet could prove, what he has not even asserted his readiness to prove, that there is a necessary connection between the cheapness of corn and low wages, he would make out something like a case in his favour; but it is impossible to make the attempt, much less establish the connection in the face of the fact that food has recently risen in this country, but wages have not risen in proportion. This induction of the right hon. Gentleman is founded on an experience far too scanty; he raises a a superstructure far too broad to rest on the foundation of a single case. It is perfectly true that cheap corn and low wages go together in Prussia, but it is equally true that on the banks of the Ohio food is cheaper than either in Prussia or Belgium, but wages are twice as high. It is therefore perfectly established by experience, as I should say it is, *a priori*, clear, that the mere circumstance of the price of provisions does not in itself furnish any cause why the wages of the labourer should descend in value. Now, Sir, as the right hon. Baronet has shown no reason whatever why the House should believe in his principle that to the body of the people cheap food is not a blessing, his whole reasoning is swept away, for the foundation of his argument is unsound and indefensible. I also dissent, Sir, from the other great principle on which he rests his measure. I deny altogether that we ought to be independent, to a great extent at least, of foreign supply for our food. I do not argue that if we could be perfectly independent, it might not be a good state of things. It is unnecessary to argue that question, for the right hon. Baronet disclaims the notion of perfect independence. I am not fond, generally speaking, of appealing to demonstrations in matters of political discussion, but it seems to me that it can be demonstrated by the logic applicable to political science, that it is perfectly impossible to have corn dearer than in the surrounding countries, and to be independent of foreign supply. It is estimated that the people of this country consume annually twenty-five millions of quarters of corn. It is quite certain, that even on an average year, you must sow such a quantity of seed as will give you something more than the average; and in abundant years you will produce a great deal more. It follows of necessity, from the very nature of the product and the change in the seasons, that you can never rely with certainty on bringing to market twenty-five millions of quarters, and neither more nor less. If you want twenty-five millions of cotton stockings, you may order them, and machinery will supply you with neither more nor less. But if you want to have a certain fixed quantity yielded by the land you cannot make any arrangements which will insure such an object. If corn is cheaper abroad than in England, you must export your surplus produce at the price at which the corn of the surrounding countries bring in their own markets. Therefore, whatever you produce over a fixed quantity, will be sold at such a loss as must prove ruinous to the English grower, and must ultimately induce him to withdraw his land from such cultivation; and experience confirms the justness of this speculation. England was formerly an exporting country as to corn. But our dependence has been gradually increasing. It was great from 1820 to 1830, and it increased in the period from 1830 to 1840. It seems that notwithstanding all the improvements in agriculture, the progress of our population has been so great, in consequence of the discoveries in machinery and the immense trade which has of late grown up, that agricultural skill cannot overtake the advance we have made. Well, then, we are already dependent. The right hon. Baronet admits we are, but he says he prefers casual dependence to constant dependence. I answer that I prefer constant dependence to casual dependence. I prefer it partly from the reasons adduced to the House already by those more competent to form a judgment on the subject than I am, because I think it has a tendency to make countries mutually dependent, and because I am persuaded that when our supply is casual, it must be met, not by an export of manufactures, but by a drainage of the precious metals—thus producing a constantly recurring state of panic and distress which Mr. Huskisson predicted twenty years ago, with but too just a foresight. But the right hon. Baronet, on his own showing, nullifies his own theory. The right hon. Baronet says, "we shall generally be independent of foreign supply, but it is probable, we shall have some bad years, and it may happen, that in those years, countries in the same latitude, will be in the same predicament. The latter may shut their ports against us, and we may be thus reduced to the last extremity, by relying on foreign aid." Here is an admission, then, that in bad years we must be dependent on foreign countries, and being only casually dependent, we should then be at the mercy of those countries, whence our supply is to come. By the limitation proposed, we should be dependent on those who might be suffering the same distress as ourselves, and who may have the additional motive for refusing to supply our wants of a national quarrel. But though it is generally true, that the harvests of this country, and of countries in the same latitude, may be bad in some particular year, it by no means follows, that the harvests at Illinois and Ohio should be equally bad. So that the right hon. Gentleman's proposal amounts to this—"You must be occasionally dependent on such foreigners as will be subject to the same vicissitude of seasons, and may shut their ports against you, if a quarrel should arise; but you shall be interdicted from being dependent on those countries, which will most likely be able, when you are deficient, to supply you." Can anything be more clear, than that next to independence, and, indeed, amounting in practical effect to the same thing, is a very wide dependence, a dependence on the whole world, on every state and every climate? There is the highest probability, that the crops will not fail every where, in the same year. There is a probability equally strong against our being in hostility with all the world. It seems to me, then, that the more unvarying is your demand, the greater is the prospect of your independence; for it is quite clear, that the right hon. Baronet does not suppose, that his sliding-scale will give a constant supply of corn, from our own resources. I confess, I do think, and I have always thought, that the danger of political dependence following commercial dependence, was a danger which it is quite impossible to show has any real existence. Experience is so strong on this point, that clear as was the case made out by my noble Friend, the Member for London the other night, he might have made it still stronger. So far as my investigation has gone—the right hon. Baronet will set me right if I am wrong—the greatest import of corn ever made up to that time in any one year, till of late, of which we have any account, was in the year 1810, and from countries under the direct influence of the continental system then established. In 1810, we imported 1,600,000 quarters of wheat. Of these, 800,000 quarters came from France, and the rest from countries then provinces of France. Now, observe, that was in the year 1810, in the very height of the continental system, when it was screwed up to the utmost pitch by Napoleon, who deposed his own brother because he did not act up to his principles, and held in his hands the crowns of almost every King in Europe. Now, is it likely, that we shall be placed again in such a contention, with the whole of Europe united against us, under a chief of such extraordinary ability and energy as Napoleon, and who was distinguished above all by two things—his intense hatred of this country, and his resolution to attack her through her trade by commercial prohibitions? And yet, under such a Government, and in a year when it was stretched to its farthest limit, we imported into England, and from his own dominions, a greater quantity of corn, than we had ever done previously. That circumstance—unless I hear some explanation which does away with its effect—has, I own, greatly influenced me in becoming reconciled to that commercial dependence, which, I think, in many respects, a great blessing to nations, and which I do not think, as I have already said, has any connection with political dependence. I say, Sir, that mutual commercial dependence is a great blessing, and I fully agree with all which was so eloquently on this point said by my noble Friend, the Member for Tiverton. I cannot but consider it as most consolatory, and one of those circumstances fraught with best hopes for mankind, when we see a vast and increasing population engaged, as their most lucrative employment, in turning a wilderness into cornfields, and whose numbers double every twenty-three years. It is impossible to place a limit to the products which our skill and vast accumulation of capital will enable us to supply such a rapidly increasing community. We might supply the whole world with manufactures, and have almost a monopoly of the trade of the world. Whatever temporary distress we might feel, we should be cheered by the reflection, that other nations were raising abundant provisions for us on the banks of the Mississipi and the Vistula. On the contrary, in those lands where coal was not found, where there was no machinery to set up manufactures, the people would look to us for clothing, cutlery, and ten thousand other necessaries and comforts to be supplied by our skill. But in steps the legislator and says, "You who ought to be a manufacturer, for the world must turn ploughman, and you who are a ploughman must be turned against your will into a manufacturer; you shall not buy and sell—you shall not deal with one another. Artisans must starve in England, that the barren lands may yield an immediate rent to their owners, and the agriculturist in America, who is willing to spend his time, and employ his labour, leveling forests to supply you with food, is obliged to turn a manufacturer of bad cloth and bad knives, until experience has taught him to become your rival." All this is brought about, that one particular class may be benefited at the expense of the others, though we have been cautioned against entering upon this subject by the hon. and learned Member for Bradford. I cannot refrain from touching it, although I hope I shall do so in such a manner that no one can condemn the spirit in which I shall speak. It is not possible to shut our eyes to the remote political consequences of such a state of things. The people have borne their privations patiently — they have borne their disappointments patiently, for with regard to those little exhibitions of feeling to which allusion has been made, I think as little of them as I dare say the right hon. Baronet himself thinks. But it is our duty to look to the future; and I must say, that if there be to me any sign that is ominous—any sign which every friend of law, of property, and of order, ought to contemplate with uneasiness; it is that one which I see so very generally hailed with acclamation by those Gentlemen who professed the strongest attachment to the principles—Conservative policy. I know of nothing that seems more alarming than the obstinacy and the enthusiasm with which some persons, to whom I can give no better name than that of incendiaries—persons who profess doctrines subversive of all order and all property, labour to prevent a settlement of the question of the Corn-laws. When I know that by the advice of some noted dealers in sedition, numbers of people called Chartists, have gone to break up meetings held for the purpose of petitioning for a repeal of the Corn-laws, I look upon it as a sign, not of immediate, but of serious and future danger. For what reason was it that those whom the Gentlemen opposite agreed with, in designating as incendiaries and sowers of sedition, were desirous of preventing an alteration in what they admitted to be abuse? Did that proceed from a love of the landed aristocracy, or of any of the interests connected with the aristocracy? They all knew, that these incendiaries hated the aristocracy — that no persons talked more bitterly against the aristocracy; and yet if a meeting were called in almost any of the great towns in this country to petition against the Corn-laws, those men would move heaven and earth to cause the meeting to fail; and for what purpose? Evidently for this; they knew perfectly well, that however much the people might complain of the effects of the present partition of power and of Government—however much they might feel abuses merely political, there was very little danger, unless they had such a grievance as the Corn-law to work upon, they would never be able to raise the people against the established order of things. They knew, that the most formidable rebellions were the rebellions of the belly. I firmly believe, that it is not by chance, but by deliberation, and with a serious purpose that those parties wish to have the Corn-laws remain part of our institutions, in order that some day or another they may be able to inflict on both the same death. I believe, that they wish this abuse to remain part of our laws, in order that some day or another—that day he prayed they might never see—this abuse and our laws might perish together. There is also another circumstance connected with the question to which I will refer. The hon. and learned Member for Bradford has warned us not to draw any parallel from France and the French Revolution. The hon. and learned Member will excuse me, if I allude to the subject in a manner of which he cannot complain. If we observe the history of the French Revolution, the first thing that will strike us is, that that revolution was not brought about by the lower classes. It was not a mere movement of the Faubourg St. Antoine and the labouring classes, and had they not had, in the first instance, a part of the higher and aristocratic classes at their head, they could have done nothing. But the feuds engendered by all sorts of vexatious distinctions between the landed aristocracy on the one hand, and the mercantile, professional, and literary classes on the other, were the causes which enabled the end of the wedge to enter. While a whole empire like this is united, I cannot fear the result of any insurrection; but I feel uneasy when I see topics of anarchy, which, in other countries and ages, have been confined to the lowest disturbers, now broached by men, of twenty thousand a-year, it is impossible for me not to fear, when I hear the manufacturers crying out, that the landlords are grinding the faces of the poor; and, on the other hand, men of great landed property denouncing the manufacturers as they have been denounced in that House, even since the present debates commenced. I will venture to say, that no expression can be more unjustifiably used by a manufacturer against the landholders, than hon. Members have heard in the course of the present discussion, coming from the mouth of the hon. Member for Knaresborough, against the manufacturing body. [*"No, no!"*] I am quite willing that the truth of this assertion shall be left to the judgment of all those who heard and read that attack. Sir, we have now arrived at a serious stage in the interests of this country. I do not apprehend the dangerous issue which I fear will ultimately arrive to-morrow, or next year, or perhaps five years hence; but I say, that it is impossible that this country can safely follow up a system which has the effect of arousing and provoking the violent passions of multitudes, while at the same time, it promotes division, rivalry, and animosity, amongst the two great classes of proprietors in the country. Therefore, it is of the greatest importance that this question should be satisfactorily settled. Yet, that which is proposed, is not even contended to be satisfactory on the other side. The right hon. Baronet, the Secretary for the Home Department, abjured all notions of finality. The hon. Gentleman now laid it down as a wise system, that we should legislate gradually, and in bit by bit reforms. The present measure I would take as an instalment; but if it be an instalment, it is little more than a farthing in the pound. Is it to be understood, that we are to have a bill of this kind introduced as often as the Members of this House are summoned to assemble? Are we to be doomed every year, or every three years, to renew discussions on the Corn-laws? Is it to be expected, that the first Minister of the Crown will again settle, and again unfix this great question? The more I think on the right hon. Baronet's plan, the less I am able to understand why it was introduced. The right hon. Gentleman did not introduce it to please those who cry out for a change in the Corn-laws; it is clear that they are not thought of? It is equally clear, that he could not have introduced it to please his own supporters, for though they would vote for him, and carry his bill through, nine-tenths of them would vote for him with much greater pleasure, if he refused all change. [*"No, no!"*] On this point I must again refer to the judgment of those who observed the silence of Gentlemen opposite, and something very different from silence elsewhere. The right hon. Baronet himself avowed that he knew he could not please both parties, and he complained of the peculiarities and difficulties of his position. Now I cannot understand that an enlightened statesman should risk the displeasure of each party, while supported by the consciousness that he is introducing a measure that would relieve and prevent the distresses of the country. But does the right hon. Baronet say this of his own measure? He told us, on the contrary, that he could hold out no hope of relief to the distress that prevailed. Does he then bring in his bill to settle the question? Why, finality is disdained on his own bench. Why, then, did the right hon. Baronet introduce his measure? To prevent frauds in taking the averages, of the existence of which frauds he was not sure, and which he acknowledged must have been much exaggerated. He also introduced it to fix the price of wheat at between 54*s*. and 58*s*. a quarter. But the right hon. Baronet gave no reason for fixing upon that price more than another; all his arguments upon that point were extremely vague. To be sure it is a difficult thing for a statesman to say at what price any article ought to sell; but that is the reason why all wise statesmen refuse to legislate on the subject. That is the reason why all wise statesmen leave the price to be settled between the buyer and the seller. Taking the right hon. Baronet's plan at his own valuation—taking it at his own statement—it is a measure which settles nothing; it is a measure which pleases nobody; it is a measure which nobody asked for, and which nobody thanks him for; it is a measure which will not extend trade; it is a measure which will not relieve distress, and fixes the supply of provisions at a price of which the right hon. Baronet does not profess to know any thing, and for which he can give no reason. On principle then I oppose the measure of the right hon. Baronet, and on principle I approve of that of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton. In the first place I do not argue, nor do I understand the hon. Member for Wolverhampton to argue, that a duty upon imported corn, imposed *bonâ fide* for purposes of revenue, is wholly indefensible. At all events, I do not wish to be understood as expressing a decided opinion on the point. With reference to the principle of protection to which the hon. Member for Wolverhampton is opposed, there are, as my noble Friend has stated, two grounds for granting it, in one of which that which justifies it on the ground of special burdens. It has not yet been proved, indeed, to my satisfaction, that the price of corn, grown by the English farmer, is increased by burdens lying peculiarly upon him; but I think that if it can be proved that the price is so enhanced, the English farmer is, to the proved extent, entitled to protection; reserving to myself, at the same time, the right of maintaining that, in such a case, it would be much more expedient to effect a new distribution of taxes than to retain the present system. With respect to another ground which is urged for not, at present, removing all protection from agriculture, I must say it seems to me to be unanswerable. I am not disposed to take away, at once, all protection from the English farmer. I think that time ought to be allowed to enable him to transfer his capital from one branch of industry to another, and therefore I consider the word "now" in the hon. Member for Wolverhampton's amendment objectionable. Although, however, I differ from the hon. Member's resolution, I do not see that I materially differ from him in principle. The hon. Member has admitted that it would be folly and bigotry on the part of the people to insist on the immediate repeal of the Corn-law, if there was any prospect that, within a certain reasonable distance of time, its repeal would be effected, with proper precautions. I clearly understand the hon. Member to move his resolution, in a fit of despair, as it were; and that, knowing he can get nothing, he is resolved to ask for a good deal more than he wants. I certainly understand the hon. Member to say that if he saw any chance of the question being brought to a settlement on what he considered sound principles, the word "now" in his resolution should not stand in the way of such a consummation. Whilst, however, that word remains in the amendment, I can not conscientiously concur in it. With respect to a fixed duty, I consider it in no other light than as a mitigation or compromise, and as such I am ready to support it. I would support any measure which would afford relief to the people; but I never will consider any measure to be a final settlement of the question which leaves a distinct protective duty greater than is necessary to countervail the burdens which shall be proved to fall peculiarly upon agriculture. I give my support to a fixed duty as a measure which is, no doubt, imperfect, but which is a decided improvement upon the present system. I do not mean to vote for the amendment, and my principal reason in rising upon this occasion was to declare my opinions, lest my motives should be misunderstood. My objection to the amendment applies only to the word "now," and on these grounds which I thought it right to explain I shall decline giving my vote on the hon. Member's proposition.

Mr. *S. Wortley* said, that, unwilling as he was to allow the debate to pass off without declaring his views upon this subject, he was at the same time aware that it was impossible for him, and difficult for many who were better qualified for the task than himself, to add any thing new upon the present occasion. But at the same time he was desirous of expressing publicly his opinion with respect to the question which had been submitted to the House, and to give the reasons which induced him to give his opposition to the motion of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton. And if, indeed, he had no other reason for rising on this occasion, he should have taken the liberty of doing so in consequence of the speech which had just fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh; for he must say, that of all the speeches which he had heard for a long time, either there or elsewhere, he had never heard one which answered so little the purposes of its author. The great effort of one half of that speech was to raise up phantoms which were constantly before the mind of the right hon. Gentleman, and the other half was wholly inconsistent with the course which he had announced his intention to pursue. The right hon. Gentleman charged his right hon. Friend with having laid it down as a general and abstract principle, that cheap food was no blessing to the population of this country. Why, the right hon. Gentleman must be well aware, and he must see, that that charge was a shadow of his own conjuring. The right hon. Baronet had never made use of such an expression. There could be no question about it—if they looked to the abstract proposition—if they asked whether it was not abstractedly true, that the cheapness of food was a blessing to the people?—that the answer must be in the affirmative, as considered in one sense; but were they to assume (notwithstanding the truth of the abstract principle) that with the cheapness of food the condition of the consumer was necessarily improved? The argument of the right hon. Gentleman was this; but it depended upon whether the population for whom this cheapness of food was obtained, would have the means of procuring that larger supply of cheap food. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh had talked of this portion of the subject in the same manner as many other persons had done—as if it were solely a question to be considered in relation not to the prices of labour but to those of food. It had been contended that if the prices of food were lowered, in an equal proportion would the rate of wages allow the labourer to obtain a larger supply of those articles which constituted the necessaries of life. But it did not follow that this argument applied to the population of this country. Suppose that at the present moment the price of corn was reduced by the importation of supplies of foreign corn, he was prepared to contend that the agricultural and manufacturing labourer would not obtain the benefit of the cheapness of the article, but that the advantage of the cheapness would go into the pockets of others than the labourers; and the reason why this must be the case was, that here, at the present moment, there was a superabundance of labour compared with the demand. Hon. gentlemen quoted the United States and other places, where unquestionably a higher rate of wages was obtained, in consequence of the demand for labour, than in this country. There was here so much larger a supply of labour than the demand required, that wages were depressed to the utmost limit which the price of food allowed. This question of the connection of wages with food was one of considerable importance, and one which he thought appeared to be little understood. Hon. Gentlemen on the other side were apt to say, in the course of this debate, that the labouring people had become more intelligent and informed, and were better educated. He firmly and unquestionably believed it to be the case; but he also believed that the result of that increased knowledge, and of the merits and value of this increased education, was, that they did not look to the repeal of the Corn-laws as the panacea for their distress. He believed that a great portion of our manufacturing population felt a strong conviction on their minds that there were other questions to be considered and adjusted, which more deeply affected their moral and social condition; there were other questions more deserving of anxiety, to which it was their interest to turn their attention. [Mr. *C. Buller:* What are they?] The hon. and learned Gentleman asked what those questions were, and he would tell him. There were the questions as to the better regulation of labour, which deeply affected every act of the labourer's life, and which bore directly or indirectly upon their social habits. He contended that to these points the House should turn its attention. [Mr. *C. Buller:* The factory system?] Yes. There was the question of the regulation of factory labour. He had seen something of the feelings of this class of persons who were engaged in factories, and he knew it for a fact, from his own observation, that they believed there were other questions more deeply affecting their interests than that of the Corn-laws. If, indeed, it could be shown that by permitting the importation of foreign corn, and thereby reducing the price of the necessaries of life,—if it could be proved that by these means there would be a greater demand for labour accompanied by an increase of wages, it would be morally impossible for any man to maintain the present law. If he could conceive that it would be of advantage to the mass of the people (which must be the labouring population), that they should permit the importation of foreign corn without restriction, he would not be found to be there to oppose it. But he contended that it was impossible to come to such a conviction upon this subject. And as this was a matter of considerable importance, he trusted the House would allow him to refer to other opinions, because it had been so often said that there was no connection between wages and the price of food. He trusted hon. Gentlemen would allow him to refer to other authorities upon that point. Now, Adam Smith, who might be called the father of political economy, said, "The price of labour was necessarily regulated by two circumstances—the demand for labour, and the price of the necessities and conveniences of life." That opinion was confirmed by a gentleman who held a high position in public estimation, namely, Mr. M'Culloch, in his annotations upon this chapter in the *Wealth of Nations*. The late Mr. Ricardo, a high authority as a political economist, had said,

> "Under certain circumstances wages would fall if they were regulated only by the supply and demand of labour; but they must not forget, that wages were also regulated by the price of the commodities on which they were expended."

Mr. M'Culloch also said, in his well-known *Commercial Dictionary*,

> "It may be mentioned, in proof of what is now stated, that the average price of wheat in England and Wales, in 1814, was 74*s*. a quarter; and in 1815 it had fallen to 64*s*. But as these prices would not indemnify the occupiers of the poor lands brought under tillage during the previous high prices, they were gradually relinquishing their cultivation. A considerable portion of them was converted into pasture; rents were generally reduced; and wages had begun to decline; but the Legislature having prohibited the importation of foreign corn, the operation of this natural principle of adjustment was unfortunately counteracted, and the price of 1816 rose to 75*s*. 10*d*."

And thus then it is verified by fact, for, at the close of the war, a great fall in prices took place, and there was a relinquishment of tracts of land which had been just brought into cultivation. It was said that while the prices of food had risen, wages had fallen. Now, he did not mean to say that it was their interest to keep up the prices of corn, in order to maintain the rate of wages; but that if they reduced the prices of corn, it did not follow that the labourer would obtain more as well as cheaper bread. Cheaper bread, he admitted, he might get—but it did not follow that he would be enabled to obtain any large additional enjoyment by an increased quantity. That this was the real case —that it was understood to be the case among those who were practically concerned in the question, he thought there could be no doubt. It was not long since that they had evidence of one who was also expressing the opinions of a great number of his companions on this part of the question, and who said plainly that it must inevitably be the case. A man of the name of Crichton, who was examined before a committee on the hand-loom weavers, stated,—

> "Some persons say, that if provisions were cheaper we should be better off; but our masters would take advantage of that circumstance, and reduce our wages, perhaps, 2*s*. a week, while, perhaps, the difference in the price of two pecks of oatmeal would be only 6*d*. or 8*d*."

And he went on to prove, like Mr. Huskisson, that the reduction in the price of food would be less than the reduction in the price of labour, which, no doubt, was one effect contemplated. He did not say that it was the deliberate intention of persons whose object and disposition it was to tyrannise over those about them, but that it was the necessary and natural effect of the operation of the causes he had spoken of. When Gentlemen talked of the repeal of the Corn-laws, he owned it appeared to him that there were full and sufficient reasons for opposing such a proposition. His objection to it was founded upon this, that he was not prepared to seek for a conjectural relief to one portion of the population, and that, the minority, by almost certain ruin to the other portion, and that, the majority; for, whatever Gentlemen might say, that such was the fact was proved by the returns before them beyond the possibility of doubt, and, taking the two classes of inhabitants of this realm, those connected with agriculture, and those in other departments of industry, the former would be found to outnumber the latter by a very large amount. Then were they to be asked on behalf of the smaller portion (and he should not be far without the mark if he adopted the proportion given by a Gentleman who spoke some time before him, and who said that the manufacturing population was as one to two when compared with those dependent upon agriculture), were they to be asked to attain what was not certain relief to the one by what he repeated was almost certain ruin to the other? Gentlemen opposite told them that the English farmer was not likely to suffer by the change in the first place, because the importation would not be at such a rate as would much reduce the price of corn. It did not appear to him necessary to consume the time of the House by entering upon that question. The grower in this country must be as good authority on that point as any other, and when they found that the price at which foreign wheat could be imported was 35*s*. or 36*s*., it was manifest, that unless they enjoyed something like protection, it would displace the corn of this country. That being granted, so far would the farmer be injured by this change. But, then, Gentlemen replied

"If that be so, turn your capital to some other field of industry; turn your arable land into grass land, and make as much profit by it as you do now." But Gentlemen who used that argument could hardly have considered what the extent of that change must be. Did they remember that if any land were thus abandoned, the first would be that of the worst quality, and which required the greatest expenditure of capital and of labour; and, moreover, what kind of pasture would such land make? They knew that of such land the portion applicable to pasture was very small, while it had been with much labour and capital converted into arable land. And there was another circumstance not to be forgotten. Perhaps Gentlemen had not observed the difference in the amount of population employed on arable and on pasture land. He had seen something of districts of both descriptions, and he thought he was within the mark when he said that the population of those parts of the country which were purely and entirely grazing districts, was not more than one-half of that in districts under cultivation. Then they would have land thrown out of cultivation, and labour withdrawn from employment on that land, and what then was to become of that surplus labour? These were considerations which rendered that answer to the farmer's argument totally futile. It was not in the power of the farmers to convert their capital further when their land was thrown out of cultivation, nor to employ that proportion of the population who had previously derived employment from the investment of their capital. He would not detain the House much longer; indeed, the question had been so thoroughly discussed, that scarcely anything new could be said upon it. In conclusion, therefore, his reason for opposing this proposition was, that he did not think it would tend to the advantage of the community at large. He was not prepared to risk all the consequences of the entire abolition of the Corn-laws. And with respect to the proposition of his right hon. Friend at the head of the Government, he believed (looking at it impartially) that it was really and effectually a fair arrangement, between reasonable relaxation on the one side and fair protection on the other, and, therefore, as such, he should give it his support.

Mr. *Mitchell* said, that long ere the present discussion had commenced, he had convinced himself of the superiority of a fixed duty over any sliding scale. But when the subject was taken up by the existing Government it became a practical question, whether there was any probability of carrying a measure more extensive at the present time. No one, of course, could answer that but in the negative. The inquiry then suggested itself, whether the measure proposed were in fact an improvement? In order to arrive at a judgment upon this point, he had not only consulted his own experience, but he had availed himself of the knowledge and experience of all to whom he could address himself likely to throw light on the subject, especially to the merchants of the city, and he found that almost all of this class, from the highest to the lowest, considered the measure, though not going so far as some of them (and as he himself had wished), was nevertheless, a great and valuable improvement. Some three years ago he was inclined to enter into some speculations in corn, but he found it of such a hazardous character, owing to the state of the law, that all fair speculators were driven out of the trade, and he might just as well have risked his money upon the turn of dice. He found, however, that he could have bought the best Rostock wheat at 30*s.* a quarter, and at that price he could have bought 20,000 quarters. Freight, insurance, and charges of every other kind, would amount to not more than 7*s.* Now, supposing the average price in this country to be 56*s.*, as stated by the right hon. Baronet, the duty would be 16*s.*, and this added to 37*s.*, would be equal to 53*s.* Rostock wheat, he believed, fully equalled British wheat, and as the average in London was always one or two shillings above the general average of the kingdom, it would follow, that when the general average was 56*s.*, the London average would be at least 57*s.* or 58*s.*, and at that price a man might enter into a speculation with a fair prospect of a profit, which he could not have done while the old scale was in operation, for under the old scale, the duty at the average he had stated would have been 30*s.* 8*d.* Under the old scale, the duty jumped with such rapidity as the averages varied from 69*s.* to 73*s.*, that every one who held wheat kept it back, nobody paying the duty till the averages got up to 72*s.* or 73*s.* The only instance in which the duty had ever been paid on lower averages was, when some stray cargoes had arrived too late to take advantage of the low duty, and when parties were anxious to get in their corn before the duty rose to a prohibitive point. In no other case had so high a duty even as 6*s*. 8*d*. been paid on any large quantity of corn. Under the alteration as proposed by the right hon. Baronet, people would be able to order wheat from abroad with a fair prospect of profit when the average prices in England were 56*s*. and 57*s*. It would then be a legitimate speculation, without a reference to deficient harvests, and, therefore, in his opinion, the scale now proposed would have the effect of causing a regular importation as long as the averages did not exceed 57*s*. or 58*s*., whereas, under the old scale, no importation took place except at 72*s*. and 73*s*. Under these circumstances, he could not look on the proposed plan otherwise than as a *bonâ fide* reduction of duty. He thought the proposal a decided improvement, and a boon to the country. If he were asked, whether he considered the proposed plan as equal to the noble Lord's plan of a fixed duty, he would candidly own that he thought no such a thing. But as a Member of Parliament, he felt bound to enquire whether there was any chance of their getting anything better. He considered that no such chance existed; and, if so, he would ask whether it was his duty to reject the measure proposed to him, because he believed that a speculatively better measure might have been devised. He was quite aware that in giving utterance to such sentiments he might be accused of acting contrary to the interests of his party, but he did not think that any considerations of party should induce him to reject a measure brought forward which he believed would be an improvement, when he despaired of seeing any better carried in its stead. If he believed the noble Lord the Member for London, had the least chance of carrying his measure for a fixed duty, the noble Lord should have his support; but he apprehended there was no such chance, and considering the right hon. Baronet's plan as an instalment, he should vote for it. He did not for a moment mean to say that he could look upon it as a final settlement of the question. Decidedly not. But he conceived the right hon. Baronet brought forward the most liberal measure that there was the least prospect of carrying, and he for one was grateful to the right hon. Baronet for it. It was the opinion of merchants throughout the kingdom, that the right hon. Baronet's measure was a very great improvement, and ought to be fairly tried. In his (Mr. Mitchell's) opinion, it would cause not only a steady trade in corn, but it would add considerably to the revenue. In oats and barley also, the proposed scale would be a very decided improvement on the old scale. He could buy oats in the Baltic, weighing from 42lb. to 43lb. a bushel, for 8*s*. a quarter, and the expenses of bringing them over to England would be 6*s*. The duty under the proposed scale, when the average price of oats was 20*s*., would be 6*s*., and this would allow men, when the average was at 20*s*., to bring in oats with a fair prospect of profit. Under the old scale, at that average, the duty would have been prohibitive. With these sentiments he should not think it justifiable conduct on his part if he were to withhold his support from the proposed alteration.

Mr. *Charles Buller* said, that the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, seemed to take a different view of the matter now to what he had taken when he addressed the electors of Bridport. To those electors he had urged the necessity of putting down the band of monopolists who fattened on the spoil of the land. There was only one other speech on which he felt inclined to make a remark, and in that speech there was but one passage to which he felt called on to refer. He was glad that a remark of his, however irregularly made, had elicited from the hon. Member for the West Riding of Yorkshire, an opinion as to what that hon. Gentleman considered a legitimate subject of speculation for the working classes. That legitimate subject of speculation was to be the question relative to the regulation of the hours of labour. Was it not lamentable to hear such an opinion from the Member of an enlightened constituency? On the contrary, when the minds of the people were occupied by mischievous delusions, the hon. Gentleman ought to have the boldness to tell them the truth, and show them how mischievous such delusions were. He ought to tell them that human laws could not regulate the reward of adult labour, and that, by attempting to do so, they would only deprive labour of its legitimate market. He had never before taken any part in the debates, that had arisen on this question. It was a question on which he had been anxious to stave off discussion, because he was anxious to avoid the collision of interests to which the discussion must necessarily give rise. But whenever the question could no longer be put off—when it must be discussed—then he thought that means should be found to bring it to a satisfactory settlement; immediate concession then became the duty of the Legislature. On this principle it was, that he had always voted. There was one point in the Corn-law agitation to which they ought to direct their attention. The people looked on the Corn-laws as a manifest injustice; as laws evidently enacted in the interest of those who made the laws. Gentlemen opposite, he was aware, did not avow this. They cared not for themselves or their own interests. All their care, he knew very well, was for the farmer, all their sympathy for the agricultural labourers. They were anxious, even, for the welfare of the manufacturers, and were eager to cram their benefit down the throats of those ignorant manufacturers who were so little aware of what was for their own good. But these were matters he would not stop to discuss, for such assurances deluded nobody. There was one class on whom no one could doubt, that these laws conferred great advantages. That was, the class of landowners; and, however little, men might be disposed to be harsh in their opinions, they would believe that, when landowners made laws to raise rents, rents must have something to do with the matter. Now, it was most desirable that no such impression should exist. He was most desirous that, they should not appear to make laws in the interest of any particular class, particularly not in the interest of the class by whom the laws were made, for the mere suspicion of such a thing was sufficient to sap all the foundations of law. If the poor believed, that they were taxed merely that the wealthy might enjoy larger incomes — [*Interruption.*] He did not say that it was so, but he would repeat it, while such a belief prevailed among the people, things were not upon a safe footing, and he would maintain that it was the imperative duty of the House to take steps to remove such an impression. Even if the Corn-laws did no harm, it would be wise to remove laws that produced so fearful an effect on the public mind, making all legislation suspicious to the people. Admitting that the popular opinion as to the operation of the corn-laws was exaggerated, he must still maintain that that very exaggeration could be only the consequence of a bad law; and if the people believed an injustice was committed on them, it was quite natural that they should attribute a greater degree of mischief to that injustice than it had really caused. The people were slow to admit that their misfortunes were not remediable by legislative interference, and where they fastened on anything that was manifestly a bad law, they naturally struggled against it as the sole, or at least the chief, cause of their distress. If they complained that more was attributed to the Corn-laws than was due to them, that was only the natural consequence of the popular impression. Nor was he himself at all disposed to admit that the distress did not arise in a great measure from the Corn-laws. The right hon. Baronet, the Member for Tamworth, argued that the distress was produced by the over-production of late years. The stimulus given to manufactures had been so great, the right hon. Baronet thought, that mills had been built and goods supplied to an extent far beyond what the world could consume. Now, what consolation was this to the people of England? Had this over-stimulus done more than give employment to the capital of the country, and to the labour of the people? It was not American capital, but English capital that had been employed; French labourers or negroes had not been brought over to do the work, but English labourers, and not foreigners, had been employed to do it. Now what was the relief from over-production? Why, a cessation of employment. That cessation had taken place, and thence arose the distress. When the right hon. Baronet knew the rate at which the capital and population of the country were increasing, it was fair to ask the right hon. Baronet, how that capital and population were to be employed. To this subject he (Mr. Buller) had called the attention of the House last year. From 1821 to 1831 two millions were added to the population. During this time, however, there was no increase, but rather a diminution of the capital employed in agriculture. Since then, a further increase had taken place of two millions and a half, and, as far as he could judge from the localities where the greatest increase had taken place, it was in the manufacturing, and not in the agricultural districts that the great augmentation was going on. The population were, in fact, leaving the agricultural for the manufacturing districts. This tendency was known to be in operation. Then, what was the fact? Since 1821 the population had increased four millions and a half. The agricultural population, during that period had not increased, but only the trading and manufacturing population. Now, whether the distress was occasioned by the Corn-laws or not, it was obvious they must search for some permanent measures by which they might be able to keep the people in their average state of prosperity. He meant in the average state of prosperity as enjoyed by the people till within the last two or three years. If agriculture did not afford support to the growing population, and manufactures did afford them that support, they must find means to increase and extend the employments by which the people had a prospect of gaining their bread. The town had been made too large for the country, and the country was no longer able to feed the town. What was the remedy? Why, they must obtain food from the countries that were able to supply it at a reasonable price. If the Corn-law did not take the bread out of the mouths of the people, it prevented the bread from going into their mouths. The question, however, was no longer whether the law should be maintained, but how and to what extent it should be changed. It was quite cheering to hear hon. Members belonging to the landed interest disclaim all wish to keep the law as it was. Indeed, the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth was the only man in the House who attempted to say that the Corn-laws produced no mischief. The simple question now was, what the alteration was to be; and here he was sorry that there might be some apparent discrepancy between the arguments he had advanced and the vote which he should feel it his duty to give. He could not assent to the proposition that all duties on corn shall now cease, and he would explain the grounds on which he came to the conclusion. His grounds were exceedingly simple. He did not like to give a positive vote on a hypothetical case. The hon. Member for Bath and the hon. Member for Wolverhampton had both admitted that if any special burdens weighed on agriculture, a compensating protection ought to be allowed to the extent of those burdens. [Mr. *Roebuck*, "No, no!"] The hon. Gentleman said he would remove those burdens, but in saying that, he admitted that, if not removed, there was a claim for compensation in the shape of a protecting duty. ["*Oh no!*"] He was asked what the nature of those burdens was, and he had no objection to state in what he believed them to consist. He was stating no new doctrine, nor anything in the least inconsistent with the most unqualified doctrines of free-trade. He would appeal on this subject to the authority of the late Mr. Ricardo. Until tithes were commuted, he must consider a Corn-law necessary. He must deny, that the commutation of tithes had been carried into effect. Really, if the right hon. Baronet would do him the honour to consult the authorities to which he referred, the right hon. Baronet might be not unwilling to take the word of Mr. Ricardo, though he was a political economist. While tithes continued to be a charge on production, the commutation entering into the price of the corn, he was not prepared to deny that tithes were a peculiar burden on agriculture. If they were commuted into a rent charge, the case would be different, for then they would form part of the rent. Another charge on land was the land-tax, which, he believed, was very generally admitted to be a peculiar burden on agriculture. It was not easy to say to what extent the poor-rates and county-rates were peculiar burdens on agriculture, but to a certain extent, it could not be denied, those two descriptions of rates bore with more severity on agriculture than on the other classes of the community. These might be feeble grounds for the enforcement of a fixed duty, but some regard ought surely to be paid to vested interests that had been called into existence by the existing law. He granted the law was mischievous and dishonest, but interests had grown up under it, and they ought to be careful how they sacrificed it by too precipitate a system of legislation. He believed the question was altogether a landlord's question, and that if the Corn-laws were maintained permanently they would have no other effect than that of raising rents and calling capital into unprofitable employment. But the thing was done. Great capital had been employed in agriculture, and a great body of agricultural labourers were now dependent on the continued employment of that capital. Let the law be altered by all means, but in such a manner that those now employed in agriculture might find employment elsewhere. On this point he was peculiarly anxious to explain himself. He did not mean to say, that if men's prejudices could be set aside, the total repeal of the Corn-laws would be likely to be attended by any injurious consequences; but it was not always possible to set prejudices aside, and if the Corn-laws were to be suddenly and totally repealed, a great part of the land would certainly be thrown out of cultivation, not because that cultivation could not perhaps be still profitably carried on, but in consequence of the alarm that would be caused by so sudden a change. It had been said, there was no difference between the old scale and a fixed duty. There was as great a difference between the two principles as between any that could be brought forward. The principle of the other side, he would venture to say, stood alone in the history of legislation and taxation. All had heard of prohibitory laws and protective duties, but the first was always total in its operation, and the last was protection to a certain amount. But the English Corn-law stood amidst the taxation of the world a solitary monument of an attempt by a Legislature to regulate by law the price of a particular commodity. The real fact was, that a certain amount of protection was not given. [An hon. *Member:* "Holland and France."] The hon. Member said, that he had forgotten Holland. He was not ignorant of the existence of the Dutch law, nor of the French law upon the subject, but it was a simple adoption of the law as we had it a few years ago, and it appeared to be condemned in those countries by all commercial men. He believed the French had adopted their law from ours; but whether this country had adopted the law from France, or France from this country, the fact was no less certain that it was an instance of human legislation directed to the object, not of saying, "We will give you a fixed protection by a specific duty, but we will allow the importation of corn at certain prices; but in order to keep up the price of the commodity, we will dodge the changes of nature, and we will lower your duty, indeed, but so that whatever might be the cost of corn abroad, the consumer at home should not have the article at a reasonable price. There was a perfectly clear difference between the principle of a sliding scale and the principle of a fixed duty. The fixed duty said fairly, that in consideration of peculiar burdens, borne by particular persons, and the vested interests that had grown up under the existing system, a fixed and intelligible protection should be given to those persons. Now, if it was found, that there was an essential difference between the price of foreign corn and the price of our own, do not let them aggravate that difference by legislation. Upon what principle, he would ask, did the right hon. Baronet justify the sliding-scale on account of the burdens thrown upon the land? Those burdens did not vary in accordance with the price of corn. If corn were lower, the land-tax and county-rate did not thereupon become higher. The principle of a sliding-scale, as had been suggested by the noble Lord ought to be different from that which was now adopted, and when the price fell the duty ought to fall also. In fact, the whole argument, as to the justice of protection, was done away with when it was based upon the principle of a sliding-scale. The great objection to the sliding scale was, that it raised the price of corn higher than produced any good—higher indeed, than had been calculated upon. It had been stated, that corn might be imported at 58*s.* or 60*s.* If the right hon. Baronet's mode of reasoning were correct, he (Mr. Charles Buller) could prove that corn ought to be imported duty free at 68*s.*, because at that price the duty was now 16*s* 8*d.* Deduct that amount from 68*s.*, and the remainder would be 51*s.* 4*d.*; and no consular returns he had seen made out the price abroad to be less than 52*s.* The mischief of the Corn-law must be always the same. The speculator in foreign corn would keep back his supply in expectation of the lowest rate of duty. That was always done. Now, suppose corn arrived here when the duty was 72*s.*, the speculator calculated, that if the price rose one shilling higher he would gain one shilling by retaining it for that rise. Therefore, there always was the temptation of large gains for holding corn back. Moreover, the gain by the operation of the scale was two-fold. It was not as in any other commodity that the merchant kept back his stock, in order to gain a rise of price in the market only, but to gain the double advantage of a rise in price and a reduction of duty. What he contended for was, that the effect of the sliding-scale was to keep the price at which corn could be imported higher than it needed to be. The right hon. Baronet had put the case of the price falling; but if that were to be so, it was a mere supposed compensation to the agriculturists, and did not give the benefit of a steady low price to the consumer; but, on the contrary, threw the corn into the market by fits and starts, so that the agriculturists themselves could not calculate the price, and no advantage whatever could accrue to the consumer. Now it was contended on that (the Opposition) side of the House, that there ought to be as regular and fixed a price as the variations of the seasons would permit. There was one argument against a fixed duty used by the supporters of the proposed plan to which he would briefly advert. It was contended by Gentlemen opposite, that the imposition of a fixed duty would not settle the question any more than the plan of a sliding-scale, and the right hon. Baronet had supported that view by a mode of argument which had become popular in the present day, but of which he confessed he could not see the cogency, although it might have the advantage of novelty; namely, that of seizing upon some isolated expression dropped by some hon. Member on the Opposition side, and dwelling upon that expression as an argument to suit the views of the other side. For example, the right hon. Baronet might have said "Such a one on the other side remarked that if a fixed duty were to be adopted, there would still be agitation for total repeal," and straightway the right hon. Gentleman assumed, as an admitted fact, that if a fixed duty was to be adopted. there must be a continuance of the total repeal agitation. But he begged to observe, with all respect to the House, that it was not altogether by what hon. Gentlemen said in that House that the question was to be settled. The settlement of the question did not depend upon individuals solely. There was, however, one great advantage attending a fixed duty, as tending to settle the agitation of this topic, namely, that there could by no possibility be any exaggeration of its effect upon the price of corn. As long as the sliding scale existed, so long would exaggerations of its effects be put forth. It was argued, You have upon your scale a duty of 20*s*., and that duty prevents a regular trade, and a constant supply being raised in foreign countries. The great advantage of a fixed duty was, that after it had been once settled, and the price of corn should become high, there could be no exaggeration. If the fixed duty were 5*s*., the price would be raised by 5*s*., if it were 8*s*., the market price would be raised by 8*s*., and he defied human ingenuity, or, what was more, want of candour, to attribute more than that to the principle of a fixed duty. But while he was opposed to the principle of a sliding scale, he was not prepared to view the proposition of the right hon. Gentleman in that uncandid spirit which said absolutely that the plan would produce no good at all. On the contrary he admitted that the plan would do some good—he admitted if the price were very high it would lower it, and it would have a tendency to keep the supply somewhat steadier. At the same time he could not consider it would have the effect of keeping the supply so steady, as it should be for the benefit of the consumers, as this country had a right to expect, or that it would give them corn even at so moderate a price as that which the right hon. Baronet had calculated upon. The right hon. Gentleman had spoken arbitrarily of a price varying from 54*s*. to 58*s*., as that which would be the average under the proposed system; but he (Mr. C. Buller) could not make out from any of the returns or papers that had been laid upon the Table of the House, that the consumers would get corn at a price lower than from 60*s*. to 62*s*. He was not inclined to enter further into the general subject, but he had been anxious to explain his reasons for the vote he was about to give, to declare how entirely he assented to the general principle of refusing all those unjust claims that had been set up on the other side, and to remonstrate against the general impolicy of a Corn-law, but above all, a Corn law under a sliding scale.

Mr. *A. Hope* was understood to blame the manufacturers for much of the distress which prevailed amongst their artisans, whom they had drawn from the agricultural districts by delusive professions; and, having now become their slaves and their dupes, they were left to reap the miserable reward of the severe labours they had performed in misery and starvation. Not content with this, they were now seeking to overturn the agricultural interest altogether. Believing, therefore, that the motion of the hon. Gentleman was calculated to bring irretrievable ruin upon all engaged in and supported by agriculture, and consequently, that it would injure the prosperity of the country, he should vote against it.

Mr. *Rice* said, that he should not follow the example of his right hon. Friend who, differing as he did from the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, had yet expressed his intention of not voting against him. He regretted that he could not support the proposition of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, but he thought the better course was to support, as he always had done in that House, his opinion with his vote. He regretted that he felt called upon to vote against the motion, for he was anxious to apply, as far as it could be applied with safety and with justice, the principles of free-trade to the trade in corn. He agreed with the hon. and gallant Member for Marylebone in the argument he used in favour of a fixed duty—viz., that too sudden changes even of a bad law were dangerous; and, holding that opinion, he was not prepared to vote with the hon. and gallant Member for the present motion. He looked upon the existing law as a bad one, and had at all times shown his readiness to vote against it. He looked upon the proposition of the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) as but little better than that law, and therefore he could not give it his support. The more he considered the question, the more he regretted that the proposal brought forward last year by the late Government had not been accepted. He thought that was a proposal that might reasonably have been accepted by all parties as a settlement of this long-agitated question. He considered that the principle of a fixed duty was the best that could be adopted. It was with great satisfaction that he had heard on a former evening from a right hon. Gentleman opposite, that he considered a fixed duty would be the best sort of protection that could be given to the home-grower, provided it could be maintained; and it was because he thought it was that protection which would be more likely to be maintained than any others that he preferred it. If the proposition of the late Government had been supported, as he thought it deserved to be, by the great Conservative party, having, as it would then have had, the concurrence of the commercial interest of the country, it would have carried with it that amount of public opinion in its favour which was the best guarantee for any measure being permanent and lasting. This would not, he feared, be the case with the proposal of the present Government, the great merit of which was, as it appeared to him, that it pleased neither party. It was true, that if the Conservative party had given their support to the measure of the late Government, it might have deferred their accession to office, but then it would, he was persuaded, have secured that which he knew would in the end have been far more valuable to them and to the country—a permanent and satisfactory settlement of this great and difficult question. The only real argument which he had heard against the proposition of a fixed duty was, that it could not be maintained when the price of corn was extremely high. That objection, he believed, would never practically have existence under a fixed duty; but if it had, he thought the remedy had been clearly stated by the right hon. the late President of the Board of Trade. But his own opinion was, that the difficulty never would arise, because if they had a regular and constant trade in corn, which under the operation of a fixed duty they would have, and drew their supplies from all quarters of the globe, they would provide to a very great extent against those seasons of dearth, except in the course of those dispensations of Providence, which, extending over many countries at the same time, created a difficulty which no human foresight could prevent or legislation provide for. It was on these grounds, and with the view of supporting those opinions in favour of which he had recorded his opinion last year, that he had voted the other evening for the proposition of the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell); but believing that the change proposed by the hon. Member for Wolverhampton was sudden, and therefore dangerous, he should vote against it.

Mr. *Milnes* hoped he might be permitted to call the attention of the House to what appeared to him to be the very forlorn and pathetic situation of his hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton.

During the whole course of the debate of that evening his hon. Friend had been left the solitary Robinson Crusoe upon the barren rock of Corn-law repeal. There he had sat the whole of the evening, seeing friends and allies desert his side and repudiate his cause—some of them, indeed, expressing a partial concurrence in his views, but not one of them declaring a determination to support his motion. Indeed, the more courageous of his friends expressed an intention of voting against him, whilst others declared their intention of not voting at all. He could not but interpret this as a signal recognition of the fact, that this question of the total repeal of the Corn-laws had not been prudentially brought before the House at the present moment. He believed that both what had been said, and what had not been said, went to prove that it would have been far better if his hon. Friend had allowed the debate to be taken upon the question which really and practically interested the House and the country, than to raise an abstract question upon which he could get so few to speak, and, as it would seem, hardly any to vote. He could wish that there were on that (the Ministerial) side of the House some Member more apt in debate than himself, who would place in counter-position the beginning and the end of the speech which they had just heard from the hon. Member for Liskeard (Mr. C. Buller.) He did not believe that it would be at all difficult to show how totally inconsistent were the arguments of the one part, as compared with the arguments of the other part, of that hon. Gentleman's speech. But he would content himself by resting on one single point. The hon. Gentleman began by declaring that all Corn-law legislation was unjust—that the people believed it to be unjust, and, therefore, that they were licensed and justified in agitating against it. The hon. Gentleman concluded by stating, that the total repeal of the Corn-laws would be injurious to the peace of the country. How were these two statements to be reconciled? Did the hon. Member believe that when he had once stirred the depths of popular confusion, he would be able at will to hush the storm and purify the elements of his foul commotion? Did the hon. Member believe that when he had appealed, not only to the passions but to the appetites of the people; when he had brought into array the most fearful arguments that could be practically addressed to a nation; when he pursued a course of agitation, such as that which had been adopted by the Anti-Corn-law league; when he assisted in giving to that agitation a form the most calculated to take a firm and permanent hold of the popular mind of England; when he helped to blind it with the tenets of religion, and to point out the law as at variance with the letter and spirit of holy writ when the hon. Member did this—when he gave a sanction to this lawless agitation—an agitation into which he was proud to say the clergy of the Established Church, and of the Wesleyan persuasion, had not degraded themselves by entering—what other result could he anticipate than public distraction and open confusion. But he congratulated the House upon what he must be permitted to call the inspiration of common sense in the minds of the people of England. They had seen through the delusion; they had seen through what the hon. Member for Liskeard himself admitted to be a mischievous delusion, namely, that cheapness of food was of itself all-sufficient to secure the welfare of a people. In fact, this was the true and simple way of viewing the subject. The question was one of fact; and, it was perfectly ridiculous and foolish to talk of the law as being just or unjust. Those who held this protection by law as given by Parliament, were as fairly and legitimately in possession of it as a part of their property, as they were fairly and legitimately in possession of the land they tilled. All property whatever rested upon social arrangements and social institutions—all rested upon the basis of law, and if by law this protection to the land was established, then might the House as well declare that all property was unjust, and ought to be abolished, as that this protection was unjust and ought to be abolished. If there were one matter which time and experience had helped more clearly to establish than another, it was this—that a repeal, or any large alteration of the Corn-laws would produce a reduction in the wages of labour—that a repeal of the Corn-laws would be nothing more nor less than an adulteration of the coin in which the labourers' wages were paid. This was a difficulty which the Gentlemen opposite had never got over—a difficulty which he could not conceive their ever getting over—a difficulty which it would be much better for them boldly and candidly to admit if they meant to discuss this question upon fair and honest grounds. All the observations of the most intelligent travellers on the Continent went to prove that those countries from which we could derive the greatest supply of corn, were not the countries that would take the greatest quantity of our manufactured goods. All those countries, bordering on the large rivers of central Europe, whose superabundant fertility was calculated upon as capable of supplying the deficiencies in the product of our own soil, were inhabited by a thin and scanty population, having sufficient for their own wants, and entertaining no notion or idea of the artificial comforts which by the poorest of this country were now regarded as actual necessaries of life. So much was this the case in the north and east of Germany, that the Prussian League itself had totally failed in operation, because the corn-growing countries of that league could not, or would not, take the manufactures of the manufacturing part of the league. How, then, could it be expected that those great corn-growing countries would take our manufactures in exchange for the produce of their soil? He did not mean to say that, by some ultimate progress of society, they might not be induced to do so, but to imagine that they would do so immediately and directly, so as to relieve the distress which unhappily prevailed in this country, was one of the most ridiculous dreams that ever entered the head of a reasonable man. The hon. and learned Member for Bolton (Dr. Bowring), in speaking upon this subject, had appeared to indulge in some of the poetical flights of his early days. His glowing imagination presented to his ardent gaze unmeasured tracts of now uncultivated land in the fertile regions of America capable of affording unlimited crops of wheat for our enjoyment, reared and garnered by a population willing and anxious to exchange the bounteous gifts of the soil for the products of our manufacturing industry. God forbid that he (Mr. Milnes) should say that such things might not be. All that he contended for was this, that such a state of things could not be brought about so suddenly or so immediately as to afford any practical remedy for the distress now existing in this country, and that the Legislature had no right whatever to rest upon the hopes and promises falsely held out to the people, and to say that to repeal the Corn-laws would be to alleviate the sufferings of the distressed, and to bless them with abundance and plenty. At the same time, he did not mean to say that it was at all impossible, if the agitation now commenced were allowed to go on, that the popular mind might not be worked upon in such a way and to such a degree as to bring about an absolute necessity for the repeal of the Corn-laws. The fact that this might be done was no proof—no evidence whatever to his mind that it would be right to do so, or that the repeal of the laws, when so brought about, would be beneficial to the people. All that he said was, that the necessity of the repeal of the Corn-laws did not at present exist. Necessity made its own evidence as well as its own law. The very fact of the House of Commons being at that moment engaged in so very long a discussion about the necessity of repeal, proved distinctly that the necessity did not exist. Necessity came as a flame, as a pestilence, as something that could not be doubted or disputed. Raise the flame, and you may produce what you want; but recollect what would be the consequence of the destruction or considerable damage of the landed interest. Could Gentlemen for a moment suppose, that when the landed interest had been hurled down, the fundholder would be allowed to stand where he was? Upon the unprotected land would then lie the mortgage of the protected capitalist. What would be the value of his security? If by a sudden revolution of society the landed interest were deprived of what they considered to be a right given to them by law, was it to be imagined that they would remain content in their fallen position? He did not know whether, under such a combination of circumstances as would now attend a repeal of the Corn-laws, the landowners would be able to stand; but this he knew, that if they fell they would drag down the fundholder to the same common ruin as themselves. Having in these few words ventured to lay before the House, what he considered to be the awful consequences of the further agitation of this question, he now ventured to express a hope that the manner in which it had been treated in the present debate might be some harbinger of the manner in which it would be hereafter discussed out of doors. When these debates went forth to the world, it would be seen that those who talked so loudly and agitated so fiercely amongst the unlettered and untaught masses, dared not raise a voice to address the intelligent, educated, and reflecting men who assembled to deliberate within the walls of Parliament. He could not conceive how the change proposed by the right hon. Baronet should not be seen to be a very great and very beneficial one. Since the announcement of it he had remarked that a great change had taken place in the public estimation of its value. The irony and scorn with which the first intimation of the proposed change was received in that House was no longer responded to by public opinion. Persons who at first declared they could see nothing in the scheme, now declared that they could see a great deal. The hon. Member for Bridport (Mr. Mitchell), had told the House, that such was the opinion of practical men—of the great merchants of the city with whom he was in the habit of daily association. Other Gentlemen speaking from the same side of the House, had also declared that they saw in this scheme a great and manifest improvement. He maintained then, that no man had a right to assert that this scheme was in itself inefficient or useless. He maintained that no man had a right to say that this measure did not go as far as it ought to go, until he had made up his own mind as to what could really be done under the particular circumstances of the case, and until he knew whether it were practically in the power of the right hon. Baronet to carry a more extensive scheme. It was not the habit of the statesman by whom this scheme was propounded to propose what he did not know he could carry into action. This course would always bring with it many inconveniences from which a statesman more lavish in promises and more ready in hope might easily escape. It was possible, nay it was probable, that all violent men of all sides would be against him, that he would receive only the applause of the very few moderate men to be found in the world, and it was only from them that the good opinion and just estimation of such a measure could proceed until its own intrinsic merit, slowly but surely discovered, should establish it in its proper station in public opinion. He believed that such would be the progress of the right hon. Baronet's scheme in the popular estimation. He believed, after the majority of the other night, that it was, in fact, the law of the country at this moment. He therefore considered that all those emendations upon the scale which had been proposed on the one side and the other might merely be regarded either as manifestations of very strong individual opinions, or else almost as crotchets of the *dilettanti* in political science. For himself, he declared that he should have been pleased to see the scale somewhat more liberally constructed. He did not believe, as far as his limited sources of information went, that the right hon. Baronet had secured the oscillation of what he calculated upon as the average price of corn between the two sums of 54*s.* and 58*s.* a quarter. But he knew that it would be most impertinent and presumptuous on his part to set his opinion upon a matter of this kind against that of the right hon. Baronet. The right hon. Baronet could take very good care of his own reputation in this matter; and his reputation as a practical statesman would rest upon this—whether his Corn-law scheme will produce the effect upon the average price in this country which he anticipated from it. To him (Mr. Milnes), and to other young Members of the House, it was, indeed, a great and instructive lesson of political fallibility to see the poor old Corn-law abused and treated as it now was. When he saw the noble Lord, the Member for Tiverton (Lord Palmerston) heaping every epithet of obloquy and abuse upon that miserable measure which he as a Member of the Cabinet had assented to and supported in 1828—when he saw other Gentlemen who a few years ago regarded it in its full and untouched integrity as the very ark of the constitution, now professing their gladness to see it modified—when he saw these changes of opinion occurring on either side of the House, he rejoiced in the progress of public opinion in the right direction, and was glad to see the tendency of the measures proposed towards free trade. But he strenuously opposed and distinctly refused his assent to any violent or sudden change. Whilst the opinions of the rest of the world upon this matter remained where they were—whilst in France committees of commerce, manufacture, and trade met together to discuss this very question—and when, amongst those three committees, one member only could be found to assent to any reduction of the present protecting duties—when he saw M. Dupin, the Brougham of France, as he was frequently called from his great attainments —when he saw such a man declaring, before the Academy of Political Science, that the sliding scale appeared to him to be the acmé of political invention—when he saw that Russia, Prussia, and Austria were all determined (or at least the governments of them) to combine the interests of agriculture and manufactures —when he saw them working, as they were, to raise up manufactures within their own territories, not from any notion of competing with the perfect productions of other manufacturing countries, but from the wise and just conclusion that a combination of manufactures and agriculture was just as necessary and wholesome to the body politic, as the combination of vegetable and animal food was to the support of the physical frame, when he looked at our relations with all these parts of the world, he did not hesitate to declare, that in his estimation the establishment of perfect free-trade would be anything but the act of a wise and large legislation. Therefore should he most heartily support the bill of the right hon. Baronet. Therefore, he rejoiced that all differences of opinion on that side of the House, had subsided into approbation of the measure. Therefore, also, did he hope that when the time should come, when the progress of improvement in agriculture should enable the farmer, not perhaps to compete with the foreigner on quite fair grounds, but to raise nearly double the crops now derived from the soil—then did he hope and believe that the agricultural interests would act with the same good sense and moderation as now distinguished them, and would demand, as they now demanded, only a fair remuneration for the produce of their toil and care. Thus with capital flowing freely into this channel of improved agriculture, and allowed quietly to remain and to work there, perhaps there was hardly a Member of that House who might not live to see the day when the Corn-laws would be legitimately, equitably, and peaceably repealed.

Mr. *Wakley* said, that the hon. Member for Liskeard manifested, in the course of his speech, a great anxiety lest he should be misunderstood. It was a natural anxiety, a commendable anxiety, and one in which he would experience considerable sympathy from several hon. Members in that House. He recollected an old gentleman who informed him some years ago, that his greatest wish was to understand what was going on in the National Assembly—"I like to understand the proceedings of the House of Commons, and my mode of doing so," said he, "is this—I always read with the utmost care the motions and amendments, and put off reading the long speeches until I go to some watering place in the summer." Now, he thought that the speech of the hon. Member for Liskeard, was one for the summer, until which time it ought, in his opinion, to be deferred instead of being then read, because it was calculated to confuse rather than to elucidate. When the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth opened the discussion, he stated, that it was not a subject for the indulgence of fancy—that it gave no scope for the imaginative powers—that it was a dry question of detail, and that he felt the greatest difficulty in making it interesting to the House. But it appeared to him, that a great deal of fancy must have been exercised to clothe a subject so simple with such an enormous quantity of words. Hon. Members had argued the question as if it were one of extreme complexity—as if it were one which required an inordinate share of sagacity to make it understood; but the healthy brain, the strong natural intellect of those not vitiated by a corrupt education, understood the subject well enough, and laughed at their being so preciously deluded as to believe that the community did not comprehend it. Why, scarcely a child who could walk—scarcely a human being capable of earning 2*s.* a-day, who did not comprehend the question. It was only there, in that House, that it admitted of mystification or intellectual confusion. Hon. Gentlemen opposite who talked of the landed interest pretended, and he dared say that they were honest in so doing, that their efforts were directed to the improvement of the national resources —that they had no interested motive for the course they had taken—that they were actuated by a fine spirit of patriotism —and that in supporting a heavy duty on corn they were only careful of the national welfare. He had heard the words of protection to the agriculturist continually used in that House—protection to the agriculturist—protection to the landed interest. Now, what was meant by the landed interest? Was not the landed interest a national interest [" *Ministerial cheers*"]? They cheered that. But he was going to say something more, which he hoped they would also cheer. Was not the commercial interest a national interest [" *Opposition cheers*"]? Well, then, they seemed all agreed that those two interests were national interests, and if they were, he wished to ask why they made the agricultural interest a special one [" *No, no*"]? Why was it that the landed interest demanded protection for their produce, when the manufacturers of England, on whose industry they lived, said " we ask for no protection at all?" That was a fair way of meeting the question, and he wanted to know, when protection to agriculture was spoken of, what was meant by the words " protection to agriculture?" Did they mean protection to their mansions—to their parks—to their herds of deer—to their race-horses—to their dog-kennels, and packs of hounds? Did they mean to protect them in respect of the superior advantages they enjoyed, because they lived in a state of idleness on the rents they received, or did they mean protection to the labourer, whose wages were only seven shillings a week? Could the duty on corn be any protection to him in his miserable mud hovel, or to his misfortunes or destitution? The agricultural labourer of England was in a most miserable condition—in a most deplorable condition [" *No, no*"]. He had lately been in the West of England, and he found that the wages of the agricultural labourer in that part of the country were 6*s*. or 7*s*. a week. He had no more. They had heard the state of the workmen in the factories alluded to in that House: they had heard that they were in want of employment, and that they were in a state of destitution. Now, what remedy had they proposed? Had they any remedy? None; not a single remedy had been proposed for the alleviation of that distress and destitution under which the people of this country had for some time suffered. What had been the course of their legislation? They had reduced or taken away protection from the manufacturers: they had taken that course since the year 1834; and the only objection he had to this was, that they had commenced at the wrong end; they ought to have begun with the food of the people—the staple article of existence; whereas, by the course they had pursued, they had been the cause of the misery and destitution of the people. What was their poor-law of 1834? What did they by that law proclaim to the poor? They said, " If you become poor and destitute, we will put you in gaol, on gaol allowance" [" *No, no*"]. It was true. Then, what did they say to them by the Corn-laws?—" We won't allow you opportunity to procure bread at the best and cheapest market." That had been the course of their legislation—a course so fraught with folly and danger, that now every institution in the country was in a state of insecurity. They knew not the temper of the people out of doors—they knew not the feverish state of the public mind. He was not surprised at it, and for one he concurred in opinion with those millions who had not joined in the agitation against the Corn-law, but who said that they saw no remedy except the remodelling the constitution of the House of Commons. He approved of the conduct of those men—they had borne their sufferings nobly; they were fighting the battle of the manufacturers, and to the evils that existed were prepared to apply the proper remedy. An argument had been employed in that discussion, which would lead them to suppose that the landed interest were great sufferers under the present state of things—that they were a very persecuted race of men—that they endured great privations, and that they were monstrously oppressed with burdens; and among them was classed the poor's rate—a rate for the maintenance of those who had been guilty of no crime, and who were willing to toil. In the spirit of Christianity, that was a burden which ought to be a pleasure to the rich—it ought to be their greatest pleasure to relieve the destitute, and to see that not a man in their neighbourhood went without bread. The hon. Gentleman said, there was also the highway rate, but was it not a pleasure to have good roads? What nonsense to call that a burden. It was the best investment the landed interest could make, for what would be their rents if there were not good roads? Their next burden surprised him—the tithes. What! did they who advocated and supported the Established Church, regard tithes as a burden? Oh, it was impossible. Did they want to make out tithes to be an odious burden—a grievous load—a tax on their energies? Why, that was foul profanation. But if hon. Gentlemen opposite viewed the burden in this light, then tithes were doomed, and the Tithe Bill in a fair way to be soon repealed. When that bill was before the House, he had abstained from saying one word against it, because it dealt with tithes as public property; and having that recognition, he thought it would be unwise in him to try to depreciate that property; and, inasmuch as they had legislated on it as belonging to the people, he supposed the people could, when it pleased them, deal with it again. When that time came, surely, hon. Gentlemen opposite would not refuse to join him in legislating for what they felt to be an oppressive burden—a burden which he certainly never expected to hear styled one, by those who contended for the Protestant Establishment, or as one not to be spoken of except with pain, nay, almost with horror. Now, under those circumstances, under the present aspect of affairs, what was the remedy proposed by the Government? He was sorry, that the right hon. Baronet, the Member for Tamworth, was not in his place, because, since he left that side of the House, the right hon. Baronet had been going the wrong way very fast. He was afraid, that if the right hon. Baronet did not improve in the course he had taken, he would not be long in office. He could not know what events might occur, but this he knew, that those belonging to the Radical party were now placed in no pleasant position; they had scarcely an advocate in the daily press; they were misrepresented, abused, and maligned—not that it was not a good thing to be abused, for when a public man was not abused, he was generally worthless—but the Radical party were abused, and stood, as he had said, in no pleasant position. What had been the course of events last year? Twelve months ago, the Whigs were in office; they made certain proposals to the House, and when Gentlemen opposite disapproved, not only of the proposals, but of the men who had brought them forward, the Whigs were turned out. He wanted to know what the country had gained, or were likely to gain, by the change. The proposals made by the Whig Chancellor of the Exchequer, related to the revenue—their object was to increase the revenue by a reduction of taxation. The public had not forgotten, that the Whigs proposed to increase the revenue by lessening the burdens of the people. They had now a powerful administration; and what was their first proposal?—to continue their duty on corn—the tax on the food of the people. That was their first proposal; and he could not refrain from expressing his disapprobation of the proposal brought forward singly. He did not think it was treating the House with fairness—he did not think that, in the absence of the other proposals which the right hon. Baronet had to make, and in the utter absence of any knowledge of those proposals, they were prepared to discuss this question with any advantage to the people. Presently the House would be committed to this question—it will be decided by a large majority that the scale proposed by Government should be adopted. What would be the next proposal? Probably an increase of taxation spread over the surface of the land and reaching the poorest workman in the country. He was free to confess that he thought the proposed scale an improvement on the present system. There could not be a doubt on the subject, but at the same time they ought to recollect that the cry has been that the price of food is too high, and that they had unjustly laid a duty on the importation of foreign corn. Now in average years the scale proposed would not reduce the price of wheat in this country one sixpence a quarter. On that point he felt perfectly confident. Hon. Gentlemen opposite think that the landed interest are making, in lowering the duty, a sacrifice of twenty per cent. He would like to know what reduction of rents would take place in consequence of that scale. It would be a curious inquiry to investigate what had been the reduction of rents. Should the farmer claim a reduction of 20 per cent., hon. Gentlemen opposite could not, if they were sincere in their belief, refuse the demand. But to go back to the history of their proceedings. Having resolved not to have the late Administration, the House had now got their successors. Compare the proposals of the two, and he would ask whether the proposals they now had were calculated to satisfy the people? They did not hold out the slightest prospect of relief to the people. On the contrary, trade would be as severely fettered under the new scale as it was at this moment under the existing one, and the proposed scale would only produce a more regular trade without any reduction in the price of food. The consequences would be that the manufacturers would continue to labour under the same difficulties as at present, and would experience no diminution of the burdens of which they so loudly complained. What hope had the people out of doors that any real relief would be extended to them? If the landed interest suffered from burdens which unduly pressed on them, and on them in particular, do as the hon. Member for Bath very ably and justly advised, "Buy them off—relieve them of those burdens, and set the trade of the country free." That was a proposition based on common sense, and on a correct view of the question under discussion. Show to the country that the Government either did not understand the question, or, understanding it, had not the courage to apply the proper remedy. The burdens on agriculture had been from time to time taken off, and that to such an extent as clearly to prove that agriculture had been made the especial object of the kind and considerate legislation of that House. Millions of pounds had been extracted from the people by the tax on corn, which would never be refunded by those who plundered them; and millions of persons had gone down to the grave in misery and destitution in consequence of the unjust law which the legislature had imposed.—["*No, no!*"] When the hon. Member for Pomfret complained of the remarks that had been made on class legislation, he would ask him what it was but class legislation when a party made a law for their own benefit? No man who reflected on the nature of the Corn-law could be of an opposite opinion. The operation of it had a never-ceasing tendency against the industry of the country. There was not a moment's relief from its operation, it was invariable, never ceasing, never ending—eternally operating with injury not only to this country but to all the markets of the world. What had the labouring man to depend on except his labour. Nothing. The landed proprietors had left him nothing else, and how did they deal with him? They said to him, "We will control and fetter you as we think proper; and whatever may be your skill, your industry, or your energy, or whatever articles you may make, you shall not sell them in the best market, nor purchase food at the cheapest rate." This was the master infamy of the world—the landlords' curse on industry. They seemed not to know the danger they were in—they seemed to have lost common sense on this question. What, he would ask, made the landed property so valuable but the manufactures? Before manufactures existed to any extent, it was well known that rents were paid in kind, that the tenants were little better than serfs, and that the whole cost of maintaining the institutions of the country fell upon the land. Such was the state of things in ancient times, when rent was from 1*d.* to 6*d.* an acre; but the skill and ability of our manufacturers had brought the wealth of the whole world into the country, and in proportion has the value of landed property increased. He believed it was through ignorance of the condition of the people that they sought to retain the present law. If they really knew what the people were suffering he did not think that they would persist in such a pernicious course of legislation. He thought it was a subject to be spoken of earnestly and sincerely. He had been sent to that House by a large constituency, and he was speaking in behalf of 260,000 inhabitants of the northern part of the metropolis, who had sent him there to demand justice for them in return for their allegiance to the Crown. They told him they would employ passive resistance to the course which Government proposed to adopt; they told him that they would no longer yield a passive obedience so long as the House of Commons continued to be constituted as it was. They demanded for the people the right of representation—they denied that the people were represented under the present system, and they demanded the reform of the Reform Act. He thought they were wise in making such a demand; he hesitated not to tell them from that place that he believed every attempt to remedy the evils complained of would be utterly useless unless they applied the axe to the tree of corruption. His belief was that there was no remedy for the national grievances so long as the House of Commons was constituted as it was, for it did not at all represent the feelings of the mass of the community. When he heard Gentlemen opposite talk of the landed interest—and of the interest of the farmer, he felt inclined to ask them what the conduct of the landed proprietor towards the farmer was when the farmer merely wanted to exercise his judgment in the election of a Member for that House. When the farmers asked for the opportunity of voting independently at elections, why did the landlords then turn from them and say "no?"—why did they then allege that the present state of the law was perfect? If they desired that the farmer should exercise that right which inherently belonged to every free-born Englishman, why did they deny them the power to vote freely? Was it not perfectly well-known that every landlord could command as many votes as he had tenants? and, this being so, could any man be surprised that legislation was in favour of the landed interest of this country? The entire proceeding on this question was one characterised by the grossest folly, and the landed proprietors would find that they had been their own bitterest enemies. The right hon. Baronet (Sir Robert Peel) had led them to expect that something great would have been done for the people of this country, and he was one of the first who said that the right hon. Baronet ought to have time, provided he was not prepared with those measures which he thought would be beneficial to the public interests. That time had now arrived. Six or seven months had elapsed, and all the proposals which the right hon. Baronet had yet made were those now before the House. He believed that the right hon. Baronet had capacity, and had the will, to render service to his country; but he at the same time believed that the right hon. Gentleman was surrounded by those who would not allow him to exercise his own unfettered judgment. The right hon. Gentleman had—and history would record the fact—the control of a greater moral, intellectual, and physical power than any other man in the universe. He had the mightiest resources at his command; he had the proudest aristocracy in the world supporting him; he had the noblest people ready to do all that the noblest and most glorious of causes could require of them. The question would in aftertimes be, what were the efforts he, with these elements of power, made amidst evils the most appalling that beset the community? Difficulties, no doubt, surrounded him; but with such means of conquering them he ought not to shrink from them; and had the right hon. Baronet resolution, which he was almost afraid he had not, to control those who were at present controlling him, they might expect the greatest advantage from his exertions. There was not a spot on the globe which he had not the power to benefit by his labours. There was not a place to which he might not be the means of extending the blessings of civilization, and of diffusing those advantages which resulted from the cultivation of the intellect and of science. It was in the power of the right hon. Baronet, not only to confer benefit upon the people of this country, but throughout the whole inhabitable globe. His failure would be great—his failure must be unfortunate—if it should be a failure; and he would tell both the right hon. Baronet, and the aristocracy by whom he was supported, that the opportunity now afforded, if suffered to be lost, would never again be in their possession. The people were resolved to take the matter into their own hands, by peaceful means, and by the exercise of that judgment which experience had built up; and if the aristocracy should now fail to do that which was just and right, and if the people did not adopt that course which experience suggested, the misery and calamity now so frightfully prevailing would continue to beset this land. He made these remarks in consequence of what was said out of doors, and from his knowledge of the feelings that were entertained on the subject out of that House. He made them with pain and sorrow, because he confessed that he had no hope—that he had no hope from the House of Commons as at present constituted. He believed that if those who were now devoted to the Radical interest, which he believed to be the true national interest, were to discharge their duty conscientiously, they would candidly confess that, in the present state of the House of Commons, they could render no good, and that the best result to the national interests, and to their own reputation, would arise from the resignation of their seats in that assembly.

Mr. *Muntz* said, that, as he intended to vote for the motion of his hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, for an entire repeal of the Corn-laws; and as he had frequently stated in that House, and elsewhere, that a repeal of the Corn-laws, without other legislative enactments, would not relieve the distressed state of the nation, he felt bound in duty to the country, to the House, to his constituents, and also to himself, to explain why he took that course. Before doing so, he would recal to the recollection of the House that, before the right hon. Baronet at the head of her Majesty's Government took office, he had refused to vote him into office, because, on a previous occasion, the country had been many years under his government, and had not prospered. He had made that remark last Session, and he had at the same time added, that he was not actuated by a spirit of faction, and if the right hon. Baronet brought forward measures for the good of the country, he would support them. He thought the right hon. Baronet was right to take time to consider his measure; but at the same time he must be allowed to have an opinion how far the right hon. Baronet was justified in taking office without having better measures provided for the relief of the country than those now proposed by him. The right hon. Baronet had, indeed, out of the largest mountain ever before heard of, brought forth the smallest mouse ever seen. He had closely attended to the statement of the right hon. Baronet, upon the introduction of the present measure, and he very much agreed with him in that statement, as to the average consumption of the necessaries of life in England and Prussia. The right hon. Baronet had told the truth, but not the whole truth; he had stated the average consumption, but he would defy the right hon. Baronet to produce from any part of Europe such instances of general distress as could be produced in England at the present moment. It was pretty much the same as if the right hon. Baronet was to say to some poor starving creature in the streets, "We two consume together a great deal, but I eat it all." He had formerly stated in that House, and he now repeated it, that the distress of the country arose entirely from unnatural and vicious legislation. Some years ago they had heard complaints of distress from the people of Birmingham, but they then said, "Oh, don't mind them; it is only those Birmingham fellows." Now that same cry of distress was raised from the Land's End to John o' Groat's house. He was not disappointed in the measure of the Government, for the right hon. Baronet had said before he took office, that any one who proposed, by a legislative enactment to relieve the distress, was practising a low delusion. He had expected nothing from the right hon. Gentleman. He felt that the right hon. Baronet was fettered by old measures, old pledges, and conflicting interests, that he could not do any thing; he sincerely pitied him. He pitied him, because he should consider that if he were himself in the situation of Minister of the first nation in the world, and were fettered and hampered as the right hon. Baronet was, he should be in a most pitiable situation; for who can be more deserving of pity than one who, having good intentions, was deprived of the power to do the good he wished. For himself, he was in the situation of the bat in the fable—he was on both sides; he did not say that the landed interest ought not to be protected; on the contrary, he had always felt and said, in that House and elsewhere, that they ought to have protection against the money interest. But where they protected themselves they ought to protect others; they had no right to protect themselves unless they protected the labour of the country also. He believed that the price of one portion of the labour of the country was enhanced by the Corn-laws. He believed that two thirds of the labourers of the country were in that situation, but the other third was perfectly destitute in consequence of their operation—he meant the labour employed in articles in the export trade, which had to compete with the low-priced labour of the continent. He considered it vain, and idle, and useless, to attempt to legislate about the Corn-laws, without considering the money laws, for how was it possible to legislate soundly upon the price of the first article of the consumption of man, without first regulating the value of the article with which it was purchased—that is, without including the money laws? Corn and money were as inseparable as body and soul. The Tories had legislated upon unnatural principles from 1815 to 1830, and what had they effected? They had brought the country to such a state that they had been obliged to give up the Government. He knew that some persons attributed the breaking up of that Government to certain expressions which had been made use of by a noble Duke in another place, on the subject of Reform. He denied that. The fact was, the people were uncomfortable in their stomachs; they had too little to do, and nothing to eat, and that was the cause of the fall of the Tory Government. The Whigs then came into power, and great expectations had been entertained of what they were to do. Now, what have they done? They had acted upon the same financial principles as their predecessors, and they also had gone out because they could not keep people's stomachs comfortable. The question was a question of stomach, and he could tell the right hon. Baronet, that if he could not supply the people's stomachs, his reign would be but short. He was no party man; he would support any man who would bring forward good measures. Whatever measure was a good one should have his support. He was for measures not men. It was not of the slightest consequence to him whether the right hon. Baronet opposite, or the noble Lord on that side, was at the head of her Majesty's Government, provided they governed for the welfare and the happiness of the people at large. Was he alone in his theory with respect to corn and money? Was it even originally his? Why, his oldest master in the theory was the right hon. Baronet the Member for Dorchester. He had been one of the ablest writers on the subject; the manner in which he had treated it was highly creditable to him, and he need not now blush to own it. He might quote from a pamphlet entitled "*Corn and Currency*," by Sir James Graham, Bart., of Netherby, and were he to do his duty to the House, he ought to read the whole of of it. If he had not seen many proofs of the right hon. Baronet's being a man of acute and powerful mind, he should only have had to read this book to have become convinced of it. The hon. Member here proceeded to quote from the right hon. Baronet's pamphlet:—

> "I do not pretend to have made any new discovery."

No more do I.

> "I might appeal to high authorities to prove that much error prevails in making detached parts of this question—one of them the Corn-laws, the other the Currency; whereas, if he rightly understood the situation of these two subjects, they were indissolubly united, and they could not discuss them apart without injustice to the case."
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> "The feeling of the people must be hostile to the present Corn-laws; the receivers of rent are a small body; by public opinion they might be almost omnipotent, but in violation of it could not maintain their extensive advantages."

The hon. Member read other extracts, in which the right hon. Baronet contended that there was a point in which hunger broke through all laws, when reason was no longer heard, and all the barriers of society were broken down. The House would see, continued the hon. Member, that the right hon. Baronet also thought it a question of the stomach. He goes on to say, that

> "Equity demanded in favour of the landowner a protection equivalent to those charges which are placed by law on his estate; that protection was a duty, and the amount of that duty was a fit subject for discussion. But they must first settle the price of money, as it is impossible to fix the price with fairness while the standard of the price is unfair."
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> "The landowners had shown a blind adherence to high prices, together with a blindness as to the means by which they were to be obtained. The price of all commodities, and of corn among the rest, was governed by the supply in the market, compared with the demand, and also by the value of money—itself the measure of money, and liable to variations in proportion to its quantity."

He would entreat the House to listen to this:—

> "As a body, up to this moment the landowners have remained undeceived, for it is well known that during the last Session they bargained with the King's Ministers to support a further contraction in the currency, provided the Government would not destroy the protec- of the Corn-laws."

This, Mr. Muntz, in resuming, said, he considered a most extraordinary fact, and he could not account for it. As he had before said, if he did justice to the House he should read the whole of the book, but at that late hour he would not. He had once before remarked to the House, and he would say so again, that the relative value between silver and wheat was the point that required to be established more than any other. The hon. Member for the North Riding of Yorkshire had followed closely the example of the right hon. Baronet the First Lord of the Treasury, who had lately candidly told the House that he always selected quotations to suit his purpose. He had quoted Adam Smith, as a proof that the price of corn would regulate the price of wages, but the hon. Member said not a word about the value of silver, the relative value of which to corn is particularly noticed in the same work, and nearly in the same passage; and he forgot to add, that in Adam Smith's time there were no laws regulating the price of corn; which, like the present Corn-laws, were intended to keep the price of wheat double that of silver, while in the rest of Europe they were of the same value. He forgot to say that the comparison between silver and corn ought to be maintained. Two other hon. Members had done him (Mr. Muntz) the honour of quoting a pamphlet he had written some time since, to support the same argument, that corn partly regulated wages; they had only taken the passage that suited them—had they taken another it might not have been so suitable to their views. [Mr. Muntz read an extract from his pamphlet, contending that all labour that depended on the export trade had depreciated in value, and that corn must be reduced to *5s.* a bushel, or the standard of silver altered to *7s. 6d.* an ounce.] At the time he stated that the repeal of the Corn-laws would reduce the average rate of wages, he was aware that the rate of wages was not regulated by corn alone. In 1815, the same argument was used; it was then held out to all the supporters of the law, that if the rate of corn were fixed, the rate of wages would be fixed thereby. He asked the House, if that had been the case? Had the rate of wages been kept at a due rate with the price of corn? If not, how could they justify themselves in keeping up a protection that only benefitted their own class? They were often throwing out reproaches against those who advocated the making the ounce of silver equivalent to a bushel of wheat; they said, " You want to disturb all the existing relations of finance—you would confound the standard of value." He therefore hoped, that before the close of the debate, the right hon. Baronet would explain to the House what difference it could make to any interest, or any consumer, whether wheat was kept at *7s. 6d.* per bushel, and all other prices and wages in the same ratio, by an abstract Corn-law, or whether they were all kept at the same prices by an abstract money law, which should coin silver at *7s. 6d.* per ounce. But he denied that they had any standard of value. They had gold and silver coins, but they had no gold and silver standard. Their standard was wheat and paper. This was the effect of the Corn-laws; and the amount of paper in circulation preventing prices from being regulated by the coins. They were all flattering themselves with the dream that they possessed a gold standard of value, while they were really paying *7s. 6d.* a bushel for wheat, paying a paper price, and flattering themselves that they were giving the real value, How could they expect to go on, upon so unnatural a system of Government? Looking at the state of that House, could they wonder that the measure of the right hon. Baronet was so small, that neither by one party or the other could it be told whether it were a good or a bad one? Let them ask themselves how they could expect, while the relative prices of corn in Europe was an ounce of silver for a bushel of wheat, to keep their bushel of wheat at two ounces of silver. The Almighty Being who created the world had laid down certain principles for its government which he never allowed to be disturbed with impunity by any men. The Government were powerful; they had a majority of 91; but the right hon. Baronet would find that withal he was not so powerful as the laws of nature. That majority might not last long; for he begged to call the attention of the House to the fact, that a party once took office with a majority of 200, and where were they? Echo answered, " Where?" And if the present unnatural principles of the Government were carried out, echo would answer " where" to them too. If he persisted in the present measure, they would scarcely know how to address him. If the right hon. Baronet persisted in maintaining one price of silver and another price of corn—if he continued, regardless of the sufferings of his countrymen, the existence of which he had already so freely acknowledged, and so very feelingly and pathetically lamented; if, in consequence, his difficulties increased with their miseries, it seemed difficult to determine how he ought to be addressed, but he thought they must address him in the words used by Gray's bard to Edward the First, when he invaded Wales—

" Fond impious man! think'st thou yon sanguine cloud,
Raised by thy breath, hath quenched the orb of day?
To-morrow he repairs the golden flood,
And warms the nations with redoubled ray."

The right hon. Baronet must understand that if something were not done to relieve the sufferings of the working classes, a state of things would be brought about which all must deplore. For his part, he repeated, he had no party to consider—no party interest to serve; he had had no leader in that House but his own conscience. He voted for the motion of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, for the reasons he had given, and because he thought it was the most honest.

Debate again adjourned.

The House resumed. Committee to sit again.

Apprentices Act (Amendment).] Sir *J. Graham*, in asking leave to bring in a bill to explain the acts for the better regulation of certain apprentices, said that by the law as it at present stood, when masters had received premiums with their apprentices, magistrates had the power of exercising a certain jurisdiction over the parties; but by a judgment recently made in the Court of Queen's Bench it appeared that where no premiums were paid the magistrates had no such power. In consequence of this state of the law the power of masters over their apprentices must be necessarily greatly relaxed, and the object of his intended bill was to remove this defect in the law, and to give magistrates power over those cases, even where no premiums had been paid by apprentices.

Leave given.

Bill brought in and read a first time.

Distress at Stockport.] Mr. *Cobden* moved for a "Return of the Report made and the evidence taken by the Commissioners sent to enquire into the state of the Population of Stockport."

Sir *J. Graham* said that no such report had been received.

Mr. *Cobden* said that a written report had certainly been received from the chairman of the board of guardians in the borough of Stockport; but whether it was sent by her Majesty's commissioners or the poor law commissioners, he could not say. He thought that it was very important to know the result of this inquiry, inasmuch as the situation of Stockport was that of almost unparelleled distress.

Sir *J. Graham* begged to remark that he could not but be aware of the distress which at present existed in Stockport. He knew it to be very great. In consequence of communications which had passed between himself and the poor-law commissioners, a special enquiry had been instituted into this distress; but he repeated what he had already asserted, that the commissioners had not as yet made up their report for the poor law commissioners, and, consequently, the poor law commissioners could not have made up their report as yet upon the subject; therefore, this document now asked for did not really exist. It was not ready for presentation. When it was ready, and that the hon. Gentleman would ask for its production, he should be most happy to have it laid upon the Table.

Motion withdrawn.—Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, February 22, 1842.

Minutes.] Petitions presented. By the Marquess of Clanricarde, from Presbyterian Congregations in Donegal, Tyrone, and Armagh, for the Legalization of Marriages by Dissenters.—By a noble Lord, from Millers of Newcastle-on-Tyne, for Protection.—By Lord Hatherton, from Newcastle-under-Lyne, Handsworth, and other places in Staffordshire, for the Revision of the Corn and Provision Laws.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, February 22, 1842.

Minutes.] New Members. Viscount Barnard, for Bandon Bridge; Sir C. Lemon, for West Cornwall.

Bills. 1°. Queen's Prisons; Cottenham Enclosure; Cottenham Drainage; St. Philips (Bristol) Bridge; Cwm, Celyn, and Blaina Iron Co.; Clee Inclosure; Leicester Small Debts; Surrey and Sussex Roads.—2°. Midland Counties Railway; Hinckley Road; Leicester and Ashby Road; Stanhope and Tyne Railroad; Cambrian Iron Co.; Staleybridge Gas; Manchester Infirmary.

Petitions presented. By Mr. Mackinnon, from Alfred Walker, for Preventing Burials in the Metropolis.—By Mr. G. Bankes, from Pimlico, and by Lord John Manners, from St. James's, Westminster, and other places, for the Redemption of Tolls on the Metropolitan Bridges.—By Mr. S. Crawford, from Knowhead, and other places in Ireland, and by Sir William Bateson, from Londonderry, Ballybay, and other places, for Legalizing Marriages by Dissenters.—By Mr. R. Palmer, from Letcomb Regis, for an Alteration in the proposed Scale of Duties on Corn.—By an hon. Member, from Millers in Manchester, Morpeth, and other places, to Encourage the Importation of Wheat instead of Flour.—By Mr. Thornely, Mr. Evans, Lord Dalmeny, Mr. Hawes, Mr. M. Phillips, and a number of other hon. Members, from a great many places, for Repeal of the Corn-laws.—From Lambeth, relative to Metropolitan Improvements.—From Ballibay, for Abolition of Church Patronage.

Queenborough Corporation.] Mr. *G. W. Wood* brought up the report of the General Committee on Public Petitions, to which had been referred the petition of certain free burgesses of the borough of Queenborough, presented to the House on the 11th instant, praying for inquiry into certain acts of the mayor, aldermen, and council of that borough. The committee was of opinion,

> "That the Petition of 'The undersigned Free Burgesses of the borough of Queenborough, in the county of Kent,' praying for 'a deep investigation and scrutiny into the acts of the Mayor, Juratts, and Bailiffs of the Corporation of Queenborough,' and presented to the House on the 11th day of this instant February, is a Petition which ought to be printed, but inasmuch as it contains matter inculpating the conduct of individuals, the Committee suggest for the consideration of the House, the propriety of its being printed for the use of Members only."

Mr. *G. W. Wood* gave notice that he would to-morrow move that the petition be so printed.

Report to lie on the Table.

IPSWICH ELECTION.] Mr. *Rigby Wason* presented a petition from Mr. Ashurst, solicitor to the sitting Member for the borough of Ipswich, stating that Sir Thomas Cochrane is in possession of certain letters and documents which it is material should be produced before the committee, that he has been served with the Speakers warrant to attend the committee, but is going abroad in a few days; and praying that the House do take the subject into consideration. The hon. Member moved that the petition be printed, in order to be taken into consideration to-morrow.

The *Speaker* said that the more regular course of proceeding would be, for the hon. Member to give notice of his intention to move the printing of the petition to-morrow. If, however, the hon. Member were prepared to state that the matter admitted of no delay, perhaps the House would allow him at once to make the motion.

Mr. *R. Wason* had reason to believe that the witness intended to go abroad on Saturday, so that there was no time for delay.

Motion agreed to.

COLONIAL CUSTOMS DUTIES.] Mr. *Labouchere* wished to ask a question respecting the Colonial Customs Bill, which had been introduced by the right hon. Gentleman, which had excited a great deal of anxiety and perplexity out of doors. In the measure which he had the honour to introduce last year, on the same subject, there was a clause which provided that there should be a protecting duty of 7 per cent. *ad valorem* in favour of British manufactures introduced into the colonies. He wished this to be the *maximum*, but he left it to the colonial assemblies to make it more if they pleased; the British Parliament, however, only insured a protection of 7 per cent. He had not understood whether or not the right hon. Gentleman intended to adopt the same principle in his measure, as his resolutions were rather ambiguously worded on this point. There was, however, a feeling out of doors that it was intended to deprive British manufactures of this protection in the colonial market, but that it would be left to the colonial legislatures to do as they pleased in the matter. He, therefore, wished to know upon what principle the right hon. Gentleman meant to proceed?

Mr. *Gladstone* said, that if such an impression prevailed out of doors as that adverted to by the right hon. Gentleman, he was greatly obliged to him for the opportunity which his question gave him of removing it. Nothing was further from his intention than to leave the differential duties on the importation of foreign articles liable to be controlled by the colonial legislatures. His intention was, that there should be a rate of 7 per cent., or whatever rate it might be the pleasure of Parliament to adopt, as a *bona fide* protection and preference in favour of British goods against all other goods whatsoever. Whatever provision might be necessary to give effect to that principle should be adopted in his bill. The words employed by the right hon. Gentleman last year had been altered, not for the purpose of narrowing, but of increasing their effect. In point of fact there were certain cases in which by the colonial law there were differential duties laid on foreign articles. The intention of these resolutions was first to establish certain differential duties in favour of British articles, and, at the same time, not to interfere with any differential rates which in particular colonies might be laid on by colonial enactments. Words, therefore, had been adopted to save any differential duties now existing in particular colonies, as well as to secure the imposition of a single, uniform differential duty, applicable to all the colonies. Provision would be made in the bill to render that uniform duty independent of any colonial enactment.

RECOGNITION OF THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT.] Mr. *Hindley* begged to ask the right hon. Baronet, the First Lord of the Treasury, whether any communication had taken place with the great Northern Powers of Europe respecting the recognition of the Spanish government, and when was there a prospect of that recognition taking place?

Sir *Robert Peel* said, it was no easy matter to give a perfectly simple and brief answer to a question of the nature of that put by the hon. Gentleman. He would take the opportunity of stating, in answer to it, that the policy of this country with respect to Spain was perfectly simple and open. There was no reserve whatever with regard to it. It was the anxious wish of the Government to see Spain a prosperous, powerful, and independent country—independent of all foreign powers. They did not grudge her the enjoyment of prosperity, being perfectly satisfied that no power that she could possess for her own just defence could be in the slightest degree an object of jealousy to this country. It had been the desire of this Government certainly to give strength and stability as far as possible, by their councils and the exercise of their influence, to the present government of Spain. They thought they saw under that government indications of a rapid advance in civilization and prosperity, and they certainly had exercised such influence as they could with propriety exercise for the purpose of inducing the governments of continental Europe — the three great powers—to recognise that government of Spain. They wished to give it stability, thinking and believing that it was the government which, upon the whole, in the present condition of Spain, was best calculated to advance her interests. It was impossible to answer the question of the hon. Gentleman as to the period at which the recognition of the other powers would take place. He could only say, that the influence of the Government should be directed in a friendly and amicable way for the purpose of giving that stability to the Spanish government which they thought would follow from its recognition by the other powers. He repeated, that they had no reserve or secret in their policy towards Spain. His belief was, that it was an object of the greatest importance to Europe to see that country restored to a position of peace and prosperity, and filling that station of independence which it used to fill among the great family of European states. He earnestly hoped to see that great object effected, and no exertion on the part of England should be wanting to secure it.

COMPTROLLER OF THE EXCHEQUER.] Colonel *Sibthorp* asked whether it was the intention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to bring in a bill to alter the system of issuing Exchequer bills; and also to do away with the office of Comptroller of the Exchequer?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* hoped, on a very early day, to be able to state to the House what course he should recommend to be taken in reference to the transactions which had recently taken place with regard to Exchequer bills. It was obvious to the House, from the reports on the Table, that something must be be done by the Government. He had no hesitation in saying, that the subject was under the serious consideration of the Treasury and of the Comptroller-general of the Exchequer. He had no doubt that it would be necessary to introduce some amendment in the law which at present regulated that department. As to abolishing the office of comptroller, he had no hesitation in denying that he had any such intention.

Colonel *Sibthorp* said, it was his intention to take the sense of the House on the point.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.] Mr. *Pendarves* moved, that leave of absence be given to Major Vivian, on account of "urgent private business."

Sir *R. Peel* thought the reason given rather vague and indefinite. At the time when the election committees were about to sit, something more ought to be stated than urgent private business.

An *Hon. Member* having remarked that the illness of a member of the family was one reason.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. *Hutt* then moved "Leave of absence to Mr. Granger, going the circuit." [*Loud cries of* "*No, no.*"]

The *Speaker* decided that the noes had it.

Mr. *Jervis* was about to make some observation, when he was called to order, and

The *Speaker* said, the hon. and learned

Gentleman must be aware that there was no question before the House.

Mr. *W. Patten* moved that leave of absence be granted to Sir Hesketh Fleetwood, on the ground of ill health.

Mr, *C. Buller* wished to call the attention of the House to the hardship of refusing leave of absence to Mr. Granger. Although he did not advocate the absence of any Gentleman on account of professional business on circuit, he thought it must be the object of the House to make the attendance on its duties as convenient to the lawyers as they could—to lawyers as well as other hon. Members of the House. When the question arose, last Session, for granting leave of absence in a similar case, this suggestion was made; that as it was in the power of the general committee of elections to place different Members upon different committees, as the matter was not now settled by ballot, and their personal attendance was not required, the practical course would be, that if it was known a number of Gentlemen were going circuit, not to let them miss their turn altogether, but place them on those lists which would not be called on during the continuance of the circuits. That rule was founded in common sense, and one which the House ought to be ready to adopt on the present occasion. The northern circuit would begin on Wednesday, and counsel must go down; and as the lists were not made out, they could not tell to which they might belong. If the convenience of the lawyers was to be consulted, they ought to be placed on those lists which would not interfere with their circuits.

Mr. *Jervis* believed he was now perfectly in order in making a few remarks. He admitted, that he had some interest in the matter, but that was no reason why he should not express his opinion on the subject. During the last Session the matter was discussed and decided by a vote of the House, and ought not to be disposed of in a summary manner now, unless the circumstances were different. He did not see what inconvenience could result from giving leave of absence to Mr. Granger and some few other Gentlemen. Barristers certainly could not be excused from being put on the panel; but the committee had the power of substituting other Members and reserving them for a future occasion.

Sir *G. Grey* said, if leave of absence should be refused to barristers by the House, the general committee would be troubled with applications from York, Lancaster, and other places on the circuit, by hon. Members, who would throw themselves on the consideration of the committee. If Gentlemen were *bonâ fide* going on circuit, it would be much better to give them leave, and place their names on another panel after their return.

Mr. *Murphy* trusted he should not be considered indelicate in first appearing before the House in a matter affecting his own interests. But this subject also affected the interests of a great number of other hon. Members. If their object was to escape the duty of attending the committees altogether, the case would be very different; but as no inconvenience could arise to the House, he trusted the indulgence would be granted.

Lord *Mahon* thought the application on the present occasion perfectly just and reasonable. The indulgence now claimed was granted to hon. Members during the last Session, and surely some reason ought to be given for departing from that decision.

Lord *G. Somerset* said, it was not possible for the committee to make the selection until the commencement of the ensuing week, and in a few days afterwards they would be able to select the panels. He, therefore, suggested that leave should not be given until after the appointment of the chairman's panel, and until after the general panels should be appointed. This certainly could not give much inconvenience to hon. and learned Gentlemen, and it was certainly his wish to give them every possible facility consistent with their duties to the House.

Lord *J. Russell* thought the House was generally agreed as to the object they should have in view. There was, in the first place, a desire not to give an undue exemption to Members of the learned profession from the duties to be performed in election committees, and concurring in that opinion he joined in opposing the indulgence on the grounds which had been stated; but he concurred in the opinion that every accommodation which could be given to the members of the learned profession, which was not inconsistent with the performance of their duties, ought to be granted. It was certainly of the utmost importance to Members of that profession to be excused from attending, if they were debarred from attending. Such being the case, he thought, as to the particular mode in which the object should be carried into effect, that it had better be considered by the different Members of the general committee. His hon. Friend near him thought that the most convenient mode was to grant leave of absence, and afterwards, in arranging the panel, specify the names of those Members who should not be called on to serve immediately. The noble Lord was of a different opinion —viz., that the members of the committee should consider the most convenient mode in which the object could be effected. Whilst the House was agreed as to what the object should be, he thought the members of the learned profession might rest assured that, whilst the House did not mean to give them particular exemption from the duties of election committees, it was incumbent on the House not only to consider their interest, but the interests which might be committed to their care.

Leave given to Sir Hesketh Fleetwood.

DETENTION OF BRITISH SUBJECTS IN CENTRAL AMERICA.] Mr. *Murphy* rose to call the attention of the House to the detention and imprisonment of certain British subjects by the authorities of Central America. It appeared that certain persons having embarked in a commercial enterprise in Central America, a grant of land was obtained, and an association consisting of fourteen persons was formed which contributed funds to enable the parties to carry out their views. A ship was chartered and certain individuals were selected, who were to go and report on the state of matters which they should find in that part of Central America where the grant of land had been given. Two of these parties were, one a professional gentletlemen and the other a gentleman, Mr. Bell, not unknown to the House, in connection with what was commonly termed the affair of the Vixen. When the parties arrived on the spot, they sought an interview with the King of the country to confirm the grant of land, and were afterwards anxious to explore the territory by ascending the river which flowed through a portion of it, and to enter into friendly communications with the natives. They entered the territory which belonged to the Musquito nation, and returned by the river called the Blue Field's River, until they came on the Spanish frontier; and there, it seemed, when overcome by fatigue after the hardships they had endured, they were seized without reason by the Spanish authorities. They were carried thirty miles back, and there cast into prison. The only reason given, was, that this was a reprisal on the part of the Spanish authorities for certain acts of indignity and injury performed by Colonel M'Donald on certain subjects belonging to Central America. After remaining forty days in prison, they were all released, with the exception of Mr. Bell, who died from the severity and hardship he had undergone. It was under these circumstances that he brought the facts under the notice of the House, and he therefore moved, in the terms of the notice he had given,

> "An address for copies of any correspondence which may have taken place with her Majesty's Government, in relation to the detention and imprisonment of certain British subjects by the authorities of Central America; and of any despatches which they may have received from Sir Charles Metcalfe, the governor of Jamaica."

Lord *Stanley* felt that it was unnecessary to enter into a discussion of the particular details of this case, and the Gentleman who had brought forward the motion would see the impropriety of his doing so. He believed that the hon. Gentleman had stated correctly, as far as they had come to the knowledge of Government, the facts of the case—that Mr. Bell and some other gentlemen having entered into a mercantile speculation within the territory of the chief of the Musquito shore, had pushed up in order further to explore the territory. Having effected this object, they proceeded beyond the boundary of the chief of the Musquito shore, and after having remained there some time, they were, for some reason or other which did not clearly appear, but which he believed to be connected with circumstances relating to a subject of that state, seized by the authorities. At the same time, the information they had at present was entirely the information of the parties themselves—and was exclusively an *ex parte* statement. When that information was communicated to Sir Charles Metcalfe, the governor of Jamaica, he lost no time in endeavouring to obtain the immediate release of the individuals so seized, as they were seized in consequence of a violation of the law of the state, and restitution and reparation had been demanded on the part of her Majesty's Government. The explanation or answer of the state had not yet been received, and that being the case, he was sure the House would not wish an *ex parte* statement to be laid on the Table of the House. He hoped, therefore, that the hon. Member would withdraw his motion.

Mr. *Murphy* said that, of course it was impossible for him to press the motion, after the explanation of the noble Lord. He was under the impression that Government had in their possession letters from Sir Charles Metcalfe, stating the circumstances. As he presumed that Government was ready to receive information, he thought he should best consult the wishes of the House by withdrawing his motion.

CUSTOMS DUTIES IN VAN DIEMEN'S LAND.] Mr. *G. W. Hope* observed, that previous to the year 1829 the duties of Van Diemen's Land had been collected by virtue of acts of the Imperial Parliament. In 1829, the colony was separated from New South Wales, and from that time proclamations had been issued, and some doubts were entertained of the legality of the proclamations. An act was passed by the legislature of Van Diemen's Land to remedy the defect. Some question had arisen as to the collection of the duties in 1829 and 1834, and the object of the act was merely to give an indemnity. He therefore, moved for leave to bring in a bill to confirm an act of the Legislature of Van Diemen's Land, for authorising the levy of certain duties of customs and on spirits.

Leave given.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT — IMPORT DUTIES.] Lord *John Russell* wished to know from the right hon. Gentleman at the head of her Majesty's Government, whether he were prepared to state to the House the course he meant to pursue with respect to those other important measures which had been adverted to in her Majesty's Speech, both as regarded the finances of the country and the import duties? The right hon. Gentleman had already stated that he was anxious at the earliest opportunity to make his statement. It was obvious, for many reasons, and considering that the public were affected in various ways, that the statement should be made at the earliest possible period. There were, it was well known, various rumours afloat as to what the changes might be; the markets were affected, and various evils flowed from the present delay. At the same time, the right hon. Gentleman might be of opinion, that it would be injurious to make his financial statement at this moment. What he meant to say was, that he did not wish to give any opinion as to the proceeding of the right hon. Gentleman, but to leave it to his own judgment as to what he deemed the most proper course to pursue. But then, if the right hon. Gentleman thought it necessary to make his statement at the earliest period, he might do so, by taking a vote in supply, and asking for votes on account, without going regularly through the estimates necessary for a Committee of Ways and Means. He did not mean to say that that was the course that should be taken by the right hon. Gentleman; but he wished to know whether the right hon. Gentleman intended to wait until they had formally and regularly gone through the estimates in a Committee of Supply, or whether any course was about to be taken by him, by which his statement might be laid at an early period before the House?

Sir *Robert Peel* replied, that he was now in the same difficulty in which the the noble Lord had been placed, when the former Government existed. At the commencement of the Session, the attention of the House was called to the Corn-laws and the Import Duties. The course was then notified by the Government, that it was the intention of the Government to make an alteration in the Corn-laws. In the last Session there was a distinct recommendation from the Throne to consider the Corn-laws, and also the restrictions on commerce. Had, then, the noble Lord continued in office, there would have been the same difficulty to be contended with that he himself now had to encounter. Here there was the same intimation on the part of her Majesty's Government—there was the same intimation to bring forward similar subjects, and the same interval must have elapsed then as now between the announcement of the measures, and the placing them in detail before the House. He had thought it much better to proceed at once with the question of the Corn-laws, than to delay his proposal respecting it until he had entered into an explanation of the other matters that he meant to bring forward. He had no apprehension that there were any considerations of public interest to prevent him making his statement on the part of the Government at as early a period as possible. It would be necessary to make it in a Committee of Ways and Means, and so far as the public interest was concerned, he thought it would be advisable to make it at as early a period as possible. He certainly did not anticipate that the discussion on the Corn-laws would have continued so long. He thought it necessary that a decision should be come to as to the Corn-law, and it appeared to him of very great importance, if the sense of the House were decidedly in favour of his proposition, that it should be embodied in a bill, as the proposition was one that he believed no one would deny was a great relaxation of the existing duties. Even those who decidedly objected to a sliding scale of any sort could not, he supposed, but regard his measure as an improvement on that which had already existed. He thought, then, that if the sense of the House was decidedly in favour of the measure, it ought to be passed into a law as soon as possible. As soon as he possibly could, he meant to bring in the bill. As yet he had not been able to do so, on account of the length of the preliminary discussion that had taken place. He did not complain of that, but he mentioned it as a fact, to show why he had not been able to proceed. As soon as he should have the opportunity, he meant to propose the votes for the army and navy. He mentioned these because he believed there would be no great difference of opinion, either as to the army estimates or the navy estimates, if the House should be of opinion that they did not exceed the demand necessary for the public service. When he got these votes, he meant then to propose that the House resolve itself into a Committee of Ways and Means, and then explain the whole of the intentions of her Majesty's Government with respect to financial affairs. The first moment he could have that opportunity, he would avail himself of it. What he meant to propose was, that the opinion of the House be taken on the principle of the Corn-law, and the scale of duties under it, and then to move afterwards that they proceed with the votes in supply, and then with the Committee of Ways and Means.

Subject at an end.

Gold Coinage.] An hon Member begged to ask the right hon. Gentleman, if he were aware that there was a large portion of the gold coinage—he believed one-third of it—deficient in weight, and that the Bank of England refused to take it in payment? and also whether it was in the contemplation of her Majesty's Government to have any alteration made with respect to the gold coinage?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* replied, that he was sensible of the inconvenience to which the hon. Gentleman referred, and that her Majesty's Government were about to adopt some measures to remove the inconvenience now felt.

Corn-laws — Mr. Villiers's Motion — Total Repeal — Adjourned Debate (Third Day).] The Order of the Day for re-suming the debate on the Corn-law read, and the House having resolved itself into committee,

Mr. *Sharman Crawford* said, he was the representative of a constituency which had sent petitions signed by 20,000 persons to that House, but which the rules prevented him from entering upon at the time of the presentation; he was now anxious to say a few words on the subject of that petition, as a duty he owed to himself and his constituents. He rose, therefore, to give his unqualified, unhesitating, and uncompromising support to the motion of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton. He called for the immediate and total repeal of the Corn laws, not only on the part of his constituency, but on the part of every class of the nation, not even excepting the landlord, for, as a landed proprietor, he felt that though the Corn-laws gave an apparent temporary advantage, yet the landed interest would suffer ultimately more from their continuance than from their repeal. It had been alleged that it was injudicious to bring forward this motion, because it was impracticable to him to carry it. He asked would it not be also impracticable to carry any modification of the measure now introduced by her Majesty's Government? The Government was so powerful that they could carry their own measure without noticing any modification, and therefore it was right to make a stand upon true principles. The Corn-laws were not supported by justice or by wisdom, and therefore the people were right in demanding their immediate and total repeal. He demanded a otal repeal because he thought it was only consistent with justice, and he demanded the immediate repeal because the necessities of the people required that it should be immediate. He felt that those who supported the total and immediate repeal were bound to bring the subject before the House; for he was of opinion that no Member should agitate the public upon a question out of doors, which he was not ready and willing to discuss within the walls of the House. Those who maintained the principle which he maintained might be called "impracticables;" but he would ask, how could any great principle be supported or defended, if there were not some parties ready to stand upon the high ground of principle. Compromises might be useful; but there could be no compromise unless there were some who strictly adhered to principle, on which compromises could be founded. But though he would not compromise the question of a total repeal, he would be ready to take into consideration the claims of the agriculturists to relief and indulgence if they had any just claims. It had been stated that the county-rate, the poor-rate, and the land-tax were burdens which pressed peculiarly upon the landed interest. Now, he thought, those claims had been satisfactorily answered, and that the landed interest were not subject to any burdens in these respects which they were not justly entitled to bear. He held a different opinion, however, with regard to the tithe taxation. He could not admit that the tithes were justly chargeable to the landed interest. He would be ready to make a composition with the landowners on the tithe question; although tithes might be considered national property, he would be willing to extinguish tithes altogether, and to let every man pay for his own clergyman. There was another question which he conceived ought to be attended to. It was alleged that tenants who had taken out leases at a rack rent, under the high duties, would be subjected to very great hardships by the lowering of the averages. He admitted that there would be hardship, and was prepared to consider some mode of protecting them. He thought the mode by which they would be protected was this, that in cases where tenants had taken out leases at a rack rent since the year 1815, if it appeared in four or five years after the Corn-laws were repealed, that the average of prices were lowered, there should be a proportionable lowering of the rent. In the speech of the noble Lord, who opened that discussion, the noble Lord called for such a settlement of the question as would remove all complaints. The noble Lord deprecated conceding without conciliating, and altering without settling. When he heard that speech, he hoped that the noble Lord was about to advocate a repeal of the Corn-law; for he was satisfied that no measure short of a total repeal would satisfy the people of this country. The proposition of a fixed duty, or any other measure short of repeal, would only excite fresh agitation. The hon. Member for Liskeard spoke of the Corn-laws as a vested interest, and deprecated dealing with them in any other light. He denied, that they were a vested interest; they were proposed by the landlord's themselves for their own protection, and therefore they could not be considered as a vested interest. He would give the House an instance of the powerful feeling which had been raised out of the House in reference to that object. Mr. Crawford here read to the House resolutions which were passed at a meeting lately held at Rochdale: the manufacturers and the working-classes had hitherto not joined in any combined movement; but the moment they heard of the right hon. Baronet's proposal, they held a joint meeting to denounce the Government measure as an insult to the country, and passed the resolutions he had read, calling for total repeal of the Corn-laws, and complete suffrage for the people. He repeated it, that neither the proposition of the right hon. Gentleman, nor that of the noble Lord, could be satisfactory to the country. There was no place, he observed, that had felt more severely the effect of the Corn-laws than Rochdale. It had been stripped of its staple manufacture by means of the operation of that law. Its great trade was in the manufacture of blankets, and immediately after the Corn-law was passed, the American tariff came out with a high duty on English flannels, which was the destruction of the trade of Rochdale. He asked, was it right for them to meet night after night, to consider the protection of a particular class, while thousands were starving? It was, in his mind, a kind of murder, for them to keep up a law that promoted disease and increased want. It was his determination to take every means out of the House to promote constitutional agitation against the Corn-law, as the only means of having the grievance redressed. He referred to Ireland to show, that what was called protection for the landed interest, did not promote the prosperity of the agricultural labourers; for instance, there were 2,300,000 persons there in a state of misery, and the rate of wages was from 4*d.* to 6*d.* a-day. When such was the case, how could it be said, that the Corn-law promoted the prosperity of the people? As an Irish proprietor of land in Ireland, he could not permit these laws to continue. If the union were to be continued between the two countries, there must be a common system of laws, equally applicable, and equally beneficial to both.

Mr. *W. Martin* would not have offered himself to the notice of the House had he not been anxious to express his opinion upon an argument which had been very frequently employed by hon. Members on the other side, and on which he was, perhaps, able to give an opinion, as he had paid some little attention to the subject. During a great part of the last twelve months he had been acting as one of a committee of magistrates in the county of Kent, who were appointed to inquire into the best mode of equalizing the poor-rates. Now, it had been said on the other side that everybody contributed to the poor-rates. That position he would not deny, but he would deny that the burden of the poor-rates fell equally upon every description of property. If they took the case of a landowner of 5,000*l.* or 10,000*l.* a year, they would find that the burden of the rates fell upon every description of property he possessed. Every tenant, in taking a farm from him, would, in the first instance, deduct the amount of the poor-rates from the landlord's share of the profits. Every surveyor who valued a farm, would, in conformity with the practice of his trade, take the burden of the rate upon the land into his consideration in forming any estimate as to the worth of it. So, if they took the case of a landed proprietor of 5,000*l.* a year, they would find that the poor-rates fell upon him to the extent of about 750*l.* out of his income. But if, on the other hand, they took the case of a gentleman of funded property, they would find that he was comparatively exempt from any such heavy burden. He would probably reside in the metropolis in a house rented to him at about 300*l.* a year (he mentioned a low sum because the rating was always below the rent), on which, perhaps, a rate of about 3*s.* in the pound would be levied, amounting in all to nearly 45*l.* per annum. It was clear, therefore, that the fundholders contribution was much smaller than that of the landowner, and that it was quite false to suppose that the two paid anything approaching equal shares of the burden. The manufacturing interest was very similarly situated to the fundholding interest. The mills and works of the manufacturers were rated precisely as houses were rated, and it was evident that the sums vested in the mere erection of those works bore no proportion whatever to the incomes derived from the processes, whatever they might be, which were carried on within the walls, and which bore no share of the burden whatsoever. The manufacturer, trader, fundowner, mortgagee, and all other persons with fixed incomes, therefore, must be admitted to be very insufficiently rated in comparison with the landowner. Objections had also been taken to the argument, that the land paid the burden of the highway-rates. It was said, that agriculturists in contributing to this and similar taxes only contributed to a fund which was expended expressly for their own advantage. In the case of the highway-rate it was said, that that rate was applied to increase the facilities for the conveyance of their own produce to market, and that the general community benefitted to no material extent by its existence. Now, those who urged this argument must have forgotten that the highway-rate was levied precisely as the poor-rates were levied, and that of consequence the proportion borne by the one part of the community was very small in comparison with the proportion borne by the rest. The last accounts he had been enabled to procure stated the annual amount of the poor-rates to be 6,067,426*l.*, and that of the highway-rate to be 1,267,000*l.* Now, let them consider how great a share of this amount was borne by the landed interest at present, and how large a portion of it would be borne by those interested in funded property if the immense amount of property of that description in the kingdom were rated in a similar proportion. He believed the difference would be felt very sensibly; and if in addition the stock in trade and the manufacturing income of the country were equally taxed, he thought it would not be too much to say that at least half the burden of the poor-rates would be taken off the land. He had already stated that he had been at considerable pains to obtain correct information on this subject. From a calculation he had made, and which he regretted he was not now able to state to the House in all its particulars, he was led to the conclusion that in small villages, of from say 600 or 700 inhabitants, the proportion of the value of landed property to the value of building property was as two-thirds of the former to one of the latter. Indeed. he was convinced that it was not until they came to large towns that the proportion would be found to be at all equal, and taking the county of Kent, in which, as he had already stated, he had chiefly carried on his investigations, he should say that out of 480 parishes there were only six towns in which the value of the building property exceeded that of the property in land. He only asked the House to consider the burdens which must fall upon the land under all these circumstances, and the great inequality of the proportion borne by the other interests of the country. He did not know how far he had succeeded in impressing his view of the question on the House, but as an opportunity had been afforded him, which was calculated to guide him to a right conclusion on the subject, he did not think it right to remain silent, when he heard the propositions which had been advanced by the speakers in support of the amendment.

Mr. *F. Villiers* differed from the right hon. Baronet at the head of her Majesty's Government, in imagining that a sufficient recompense for the high prices of food, admittedly created by the Corn-laws, could be found in their creating an independence for the supply of food of foreign nations. He was astonished that the landed interest could tax the people for the purpose of keeping up their own station and influence. What that peculiar standing to which they seemed to think themselves entitled was, he did not know. A right hon. Baronet, a Member of her Majesty's Government, would have seemed, by some late transactions in which he had been implicated, to consider that the standing in question entitled him to the exemption from the payment of turnpikes. He differed from those hon. Gentlemen, who, while they were in general favourable to free trade principles, yet would not support that part of the motion of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton which was embodied in the word "now" contained in that motion, and implying the immediate repeal of the protective duties on corn. He thought that they misunderstood the meaning of the word in question, as implying a change without giving time for deliberation, or maturely considering the ultimate consequences of the alteration. Now this was quite a mistake. Ample time would be given for the landed interest to prove, if they could, the pressure of any peculiar and exclusive burdens. He would, indeed, admit, that there were some circumstances which pressed heavily on the landed interest. There was the malt-tax, and if the Corn-laws should be repealed, inconvenience might probably be found in the adjustment of family settlements, which had been originally prepared, under the impression that no change of importance in the Corn-laws could take place. In such cases, if any loss could be really and clearly proved, he thought that no objection would be made to allow some reasonable compensation.

Sir *Charles Burrell* said, that in the course of the present discussion much invective had been heaped upon the landed interest, which was most unjust and most unjustifiable. It had been said that the present was exclusively a landlord's question; but he would put it to the House whether it was not true, that in times of great deterioration in the price of corn, the tenant was not the first and principal sufferer. He was sure that the first injury inflicted by a repeal of the Corn-laws would be felt by the tenant; the labourer would then feel the change, and then, and not till then, would the landowner be affected. He considered that the home trade was the most certain, and the best for the interests of the manufacturers; and by sacrificing that, they would, in a great degree, be sacrificing the best outlet for manufacturing industry and skill. He thought that the allowing foreign corn to pour freely into the home market, a proposition which Canning had denied the advantage of, would be most deeply injurious to the interests of the nation. The poor would suffer by it—there was no class which would not suffer by it. With such opinions he felt himself bound to say, that the man who would bring forward a measure calculated to throw entirely open the trade in corn would be the worst enemy his country could possess. He objected entirely to the principle involved in any such proposition. As he considered that on the whole the measure introduced by the right hon. Baronet was calculated sufficiently to protect the agricultural interest, he had made up his mind to support it. There was one single subject he would touch upon before he sat down; one of the greatest blessings flowing from the Act of Union of Great Britain with Ireland was the opening up of trade between the countries, and he could not conceive the views of those Gentlemen who wished to bring in foreign competition, to injure, and, perhaps, destroy the trade of their own countrymen.

Mr. *Powell* wished the discussion to be conducted with all possible courtesy and calmness, as became a subject of such importance. He regretted, therefore, to observe the sneers which had been thrown out during the course of the discussion upon the present question by an hon. Member on the Ministerial side of the House—sneers which would pass for nothing in themselves, were they not reechoed by too many of the hon. Gentlemen who supported the extreme views of the landed interest. For his own part, he could not see why the skill and enterprise of the year 1842 should be denied the same scope for their exercise as they possessed forty or fifty years ago. He did not see why manufacturers should not create wealth, possess estates, and enjoy them—why they should not educate their children—aye, and give them an university education too, and, by developing and improving their minds and morals, fit them for becoming future legislators. He did not approve of an immediate repeal; but he still thought that the landowners had not made out a case which would entitle them to the products of the taxation which was paid by the people for corn. He still thought that there were many and great interests, which had grown up during the last 150 years, which it would be impolitic and calamitous at once to attack. He wished to see the question settled by a compromise, and he was sure, that if the landowners came forward to make liberal concessions, they would be met by the opposite party in the same spirit. He would not say that the landowners should not know and believe that they were not to make preparations for ultimately entering upon competition with foreigners in raising food. As had been before remarked, these were not times to trust altogether to their own powers for the raising of agricultural produce. They had twenty-five millions of people to govern and to feed, and they ought to be prepared to yield that in time which they would otherwise have to grant at a different time with a far worse grace. Before he sat down he would take the opportunity of adverting to a remark made by the hon. Member for Pontefract, with respect to the conduct of the dissenting clergy as regarded the discussion of the present question. The hon. Member alluded to had reproached them for taking such a lively interest, and decided part, in a question which so deeply involved the interests of their flocks. Now, he thought that this reproach conveyed an insinuation against the clergy of the Established Church for neglecting such an obvious duty, and intimated that they were shepherds who took more pleasure in shearing their flocks than in feeding them.

The Marquess of *Granby* said, that on the eve of what he trusted would prove the permanent settlement of the great question under consideration, hon. Members would argue that question with the most dispassionate calmness. For his own part, he was the more inclined to preserve such a demeanour, as he felt well assured that the agricultural interest would lose nothing from pursuing such a course, and from pointing to their acts in answer to the attacks which had been directed against them. It was impossible for an Englishman to consider the distress which prevailed in the manufacturing districts, without most fully and deeply sympathising with it, but he did think, that in proportion to the extent and depth of that sympathy, it was the duty of the House to take care, that by repealing the Corn-laws, they did not increase that distress, by driving the agriculturist to seek for the means of a scanty support in the great manufacturing towns. It had been said, that in the repeal of the Corn-laws, the remedy for that distress would be found. He did not think so. The natural consequence of cheaper food would be a fall in the rate of wages. In all the countries of Europe cheap wages were the consequences of cheap food. Mr. M'Culloch stated, that in Bengal, where the wages of labour were governed by the cost of the food consumed by the labourer, and the labourer was able to subsist on the merest trifle, the consequence was, that the rate of wages in common employments was 2½*d.* a day. He thought that this was sufficient evidence that cheap food was not synonymous with plenty of it. He thought therefore, that the repeal of the Corn-laws would not produce the good effects which hon. Gentlemen opposite seemed to expect. If he thought that it would, he for one would not oppose it. Another reason why he thought that a repeal of the Corn-laws was not desirable, was, that it ought to be the policy of this country to depend on its own resources for subsistence. The noble Lord, the late Secretary for Foreign Affairs, had told the right hon. Baronet, that the former Government had broken ground and drawn him from his entrenchment, but he thought the right hon. Baronet had strengthened those entrenchments by his present proposition; and as long as the right hon. Baronet made Great Britain his fortress, and looked for the principal supply of the people to the home market, he need feel no alarm at attacks upon his Government from the noble Lord, or any other quarter. On the whole, he would not agree to a repeal of the Corn-laws. There had been another proposition—that of a fixed duty of 8*s.* or 10*s.*, which was to fall to 1*s.* when the price of wheat reaches 72*s.* or 73*s.* offered to the House; but he thought the proposition of the noble Lord would be as great an inducement to fraud as that of the right hon. Baronet was a security against it. The noble Lord resumed his seat, thanking the House for the indulgence with which he had been heard.

Mr. *Morgan John O'Connell* should not have considered it necessary for him to crave, for a short time, the indulgence of the House, were it not that this was the first opportunity he had enjoyed of voting on the question under consideration. He was anxious that his reasons for adopting the course he intended to pursue should not be misunderstood; and that more especially because that course was different from the one which two or three years ago he should have embraced. He could not consider the question before the House without a special reference to the late proposition of the right hon. Baronet the First Lord of the Treasury; and as one of those who listened to the recent development of that proposition, he must say that he did not believe that great expectations were ever more miserably disappointed in the course of the legislative history of the country. A more completely negative speech, from beginning to end—negative in reasons and in conclusions—he had never heard. The contrast between it and other speeches of the right hon. Baronet was most complete and most extraordinary. He said, although distress certainly existed to a fearful extent, the Corn-laws had nothing to do with that distress. He said that, although the prices of food were high, the Corn-laws were not the cause of these high prices—that if the wages of the labourer were low, the Corn-laws were not the cause of these low wages; he said that if the manufacturer was driven from foreign markets, he was not so driven by the Corn-laws; that if dangerous rivals to their industry were springing up, the Corn-laws were innocent of that also. He had told them—no, he had not told them that—he said nothing about it. He had said nothing about the effect of the drain of metal, and the consequent disastrous disturbances in the monetary system produced in years of scarcity; no—but he told them that the distress which existed in every shape—on every hand—was none of it the effects of the Corn-laws. And to what conclusion did he come? To a most strange one—to the most strange one he had ever heard proceed from the lips of a reasoning creature; he repeated, the most strange, if he (the right hon. Baronet) believed that the measure he had introduced was one of any importance—of any moment. He said, that because the Corn-laws did no harm, it was expedient that they should be altered. One would have thought that in these circumstances, to quote the words of the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department, on a previous occasion, the right hon. Baronet would have "let well alone"—that he would have allowed these harmless enactments to have remained unchanged. But when they came to consider the nature of the measure of the right hon. Baronet, it would appear to him, as it appeared to the great commercial bodies of the kingdom, that their surprise at its being brought forward under such circumstances should in a great measure cease; because there never was, he believed, a measure proposed in the nature of change, which had so little of change in it. When they considered that, after the time taken by the right hon. Baronet for the preparation of his measure—when they considered that after all the inquiries which were made at home and abroad upon the subject—when they considered that after all this the measure he proposed was such as it had proved to be—he felt that if they had behaved in such a manner, a shout of indignation would have been raised throughout the country—a cry of horror would have been shouted by the press, from Printing-house-square down to the *Bucks Herald*. He would briefly allude to a few of the most objectionable points in the measure of the right hon. Baronet the First Lord of the Treasury. In the first place, he would object that the scheme still continued based upon the same vicious principle, however slightly modified in detail, which had been the cause of the failure of all previous Corn-laws. He had heard no argument to convince him that a fixed duty was inferior to a sliding scale. He would say nothing of the proposition of the noble Lord the Member for the City of London, except that it appeared to him to avoid most of the evils of the sliding scale. He thought that overholding and speculation would not be diminished by the scheme of the right hon. Baronet opposite. He admitted that under it there might not be the same temptations to undue speculation, but he would maintain that should the attempt prove unsuccessful, the loss from its failure would be slighter than under the present system, and thus great quantities of corn would continue to be entered at the very lowest duties. He would prove, from papers before the House, what a small variation in duty was sufficient to admit large quantities of foreign corn. On the 3rd of April, 1840 (which he would also remark was not the great season for working the averages), the duty on corn was 16*s*. 8*d*. 31,194 quarters were entered. On the 17th of April, when the prices still continued nearly the same, 31,502 quarters were entered; but on the 24th, when the price had risen and the duty fallen a little—to 13*s*. 8*d*., he believed—the enormous quantity of 341,925 quarters were entered. There was another part of the plan of the right hon. Baronet he would allude to, but would not discuss, as he perceived that many Gentlemen, representatives of places in the country he came from, were not in their places, and he would rather press it particularly upon the notice of the House in the presence of those Gentlemen. He alluded to the proposed scale of duties upon oats. He had heard no reason assigned why the hon. Baronet opposite proposed to diminish the protective duty on oats, in comparison with wheat. He hoped that a reason would be given for this proceeding. Persons out of doors were already giving reasons for it. It was said—he, of course, did not say it—but it was said, that the Irish were to be punished for their opposition to the hon. Baronet's Government. He did not agree with such assertions, but he thought that some distinct declaration should be made on the part of the Government to put an end to them. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth had said that the effect of a fixed duty, such as that proposed by the noble Lord the Member for London, would be that the duty must be lowered in times of scarcity, and that if once relaxed it could never be reimposed. Could any thing more inflammatory be used by the Corn-law leaguists in favour of a total repeal? Could those clergymen who had such good reason, in the distresses of the people, for attending meetings held for their relief, urge any thing half so exciting as this extraordinary admission of the right hon. Baronet? What was it but saying those laws are essentially so unjust, that once let the people see they can be abrogated, and they will never suffer them to be re-enacted? For one man that the right hon. Baronet converted from a fixed duty to his plan by such an avowal, he would drive hundreds into the ranks of the Anti-Corn-law leaguists. He could not help thinking that a great alarm was unnecessarily raised, by those who professed to be friendly to the agricultural interest, at the proposed repeal of those obnoxious laws which impeded the supply of the people's food. It was not the first time that this cry for peculiar protection was raised, and that it was disregarded with advantage to the community, as well as to the class in whose favour it had been demanded. He remembered that when the duty on foreign wool was proposed to be reduced, the wool-growers raised such an uproar in that House, that he could not help thinking they were often wool-gathering. He believed, however, that their interests never suffered from the moment the law was passed to the present time. But then it might be said that this was rather a manufacture than a product of the land. But there were other articles which were admitted duty free, and with regard to which no such view could be urged. When foreign butter was introduced without the imposition of a duty, the farmers were again in tribulation, and those in the south of Ireland were particularly fearful of the consequences. But, in spite—or, he should rather say—in consequence of this change the trade flourished, and all who were connected with it became prosperous. The Vice-President of the Board of Trade had had recourse to a fallacy which he wondered one of his acuteness of mind could bear to palm upon his hearers. That right hon. Gentleman said that if you imported three millions of quarters of corn, you must displace so much of home-grown wheat. And this in the face of a starving people. Why, did any man suppose that even if our population were stationary they would not consume a much greater quantity of corn than they did at present if they were better employed and properly fed. Would they not obviously seek a better description of food than that "coarser kind" with which they were now compelled to be content, and which was made the subject of so many declamatory harangues by the advocates for the repeal of the Poor-law, many of whom sat on the opposite benches. Although he was in favour of a gradual reduction of the present duty, he meant to support the motion of his hon. Friend (Mr. Villiers), as one which was most likely to give general satisfaction. He recollected a passage in a speech of the right hon. Member for Tamworth, in answer to the motion of his hon. Friend (Mr. Villiers) on that subject, which he clung to through succeeding years with so much perseverance and advantage, and which was of so poetic a character, and in a strain so unusual with the right hon. Gentleman that it struck him for its novelty. It was this:—

> "We should remember, with pain, the cheerful smiling prospects which were thus to be obscured. We should view, with regret, cultivation receding from the hill-top, which it has climbed under the influence of protection, and from which it surveys with joy the progress of successful toil."

It might be unpoetic; but he confessed he preferred seeing hardy sheep grazing on the mountain-tops, than bad barley growing there. He thought, such a sight would, at least, be more consoling than manufactories closed, furnaces blown out, and a scattered population sheltering themselves under the ruins of those buildings where they once earned an honest subsistence. Though connected with land, and with a landed constituency, he had no apprehensions that his support of this measure would be inimical either to his own interest, or to that of those whom he represented. He had no fear, that in extending employment, and bettering the position of the manufacturing interest, to which agriculture owed its prosperity, and our country its greatness, he was taking a course which would leave any class unaffected by its beneficial influence.

Sir *F. Burdett* said, the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, had made some severe criticisms upon the speech of the right hon. Baronet who had brought forward the measure. He was not there to undertake the needless task of defending any speech made by the right hon. Baronet, but he was enabled to give one proof of the effect which that speech had produced amongst those important classes of persons who were most deeply concerned in the question. He had it from a gentleman who was present on the market-day in Nottingham, where there were public tables or ordinaries, at which those classes dined together; he dined amongst them, and he went to all the tables, made his remarks, and heard their different opinions and arguments, and amongst other things, he learned that they were generally pretty well satisfied with the proposition of the right hon. Baronet. They thought, that as much had been yielded as was possible to the prejudices and feelings of their opponents, and to the necessities of the manufacturers, at the same time that the protection, though low, was sufficient to insure the interests of agriculture. There was no class of men in the empire more inclined to conciliation, more disposed to take a moderate view of questions which affected their own interests, or those of others, than the agriculturists, upon whom so many aspersions had been cast, which were without the foundation of any argument supported by facts. They were as a class far more liberal, disinterested, just, and moderate, in all their dealings, than any other class. The hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, said he should snpport the motion of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton. If he did so, he would do more than that hon. Gentleman himself, as he would make it appear by what had fallen from the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, when he introduced the motion to the House. That hon. Gentleman had begun by stating his views in as polite and gentlemanly a manner as it was possible for any man to do, and he had gained much upon the good wishes and inclination, and the attention of his hearers by that mode—which was natural to him—of proceeding; but he could not help observing, that the doctrines which the hon. Gentleman put forth in that smooth and easy manner were as strong and outrageous as it was possible to imagine. He thought, the hon. Gentleman, in speaking of the agricultural classes, had out-jacobined jacobinism in France. He had pointed them out as heartless, reckless, avaricious, and selfish. The hon. Gentleman had stated, that such were the tyranny and grinding oppression exercised, that there were upwards of 400,000 persons in a state of absolute starvation, and he described their sufferings with a sympathy that might well be called for; but he did not think those sufferings existed to the extent which had been stated. But what he now complained of, the effects of pointing out to a large body of starving people, that those who so oppressed them were only 30,000 persons, and the showing to them how easily they might overcome this body, without any danger. That was a doctrine which he had never heard advanced in any assembly; it outdid what the Jacobins performed in France, for they covered their murders with colourable, though false pretexts. Having expended a great deal of invective on the landed interest of the country, the hon. Gentleman went on to say, that there were no particular burdens on that interest. Whether that were so or not, he (Sir F. Burdett) was not now going to argue; that point had been clearly stated by an hon. Member behind him. (Mr. Martin), and he desired to have a creditor and debtor account between the landed interest and the other interests. Though they could not have it in all its minutiæ, they had, in fact, the result of a debtor and creditor account; and it stood thus—that the landed proprietors of England were satisfied with so small a return for their capital — and their land was their capital—as 3½ or 4 per cent; and, if they sold their stock, 5 per cent was considered an extraordinary gain. There was no other interest in the country that was satisfied with so small a profit. Were the manufacturers? No. No trader or shop-keeper in the country was content with such a profit on his stock as the landed interest of England obtained. What would the manufacturers do if there were not a landed interest in this country, so productive as to afford an overplus for supporting the manufacturing interest, and enabling that interest to return reciprocal benefits to the landed interest? The greatest interest of the country was, no doubt, the trade which was carried on between the towns and the country—between those who made the goods, and those who produced the food. If they ruined the landed interest then by any measure which they might, perhaps, think beneficial to the country, they would be acting very much like the man who killed the goose that laid golden eggs. At the conclusion of his speech, the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, having stated all the aggravated distress that was said to exist, and that the plan of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth might be an improvement of that system which he was called on to alter and improve, the hon. Member went on to say that it was almost an insult to a starving people to be told to pay regard for vested interests, in reference to dangers occurring or confusion being produced, for what the people wanted was immediate relief. A suffering people, said the hon. Member, could not stay while they were making their arrangements; and yet the hon. Gentleman concluded his speech in quite a different manner, saying all at once, to his astonishment, that the people of this country were not so foolish or so bigoted, but that, if it could be shown that by the immediate repealing of the Corn-law any class would suffer, they would gladly postpone the abolition if they saw a prospect of its being accomplished. Another hon. Gentleman, the Member for Finsbury and coroner for the county of Middlesex, the duties of which office he had performed with so much credit to himself and such great benefit to the country, after asking what the people had gained by the change in the Government, said to be sure they had gained a very able Minister, but still he thought they had gained nothing worth having, for no proposition had been made to remedy the evils which, to a great extent, were acknowledged to exist in the country. He thought it a most extraordinary thing that the right hon. Baronet should be attacked in this manner after he had explained himself so explicitly on that point, holding out no hope, creating no expectation that his plan would prove a remedy for the distress which prevailed, but showing that it would free the country from the objections to the old plan as well as the objections to the new plan, which, just before the retirement of the late Administration, was brought in for a fixed duty of 8*s*. By the bye, the evils charged on the old system of Corn-law did not appear to have been proved, though, to be sure, combination amongst the dealers in corn was continually turning the whole trade into a sort of gambling concern. When he looked at the rate of prices for the last ten years, he could not see any reason for believing the statements put forth relative to the evil effects of the Corn-law. He did not see in that period such ups and downs, and backwards and forwards,as were calculated to produce the evils complained of. And to compare this country with those countries in Europe where there was no Corn-law, and especially with America, they would find that their variations in the prices of corn were greater than in England. But the proposed alteration of the right hon. Baronet would do one great thing—it would take away an inflamatory subject which for some time had been held up for public delusion. It would also reduce the amount of protection to the landed interest from 38*s*. to 20*s*. a quarter; and that was not an inconsiderable reduction. It was a graduating scale, and in such slow and regular degrees, that it would not afford a possibility for any of those tricks being played which they saw under the present system, and must at the same time satisfy those who objected to the old law on that account that some Corn-law must exist in this country. It appeared to be a great gain, inasmuch as it did not fix the duty at 8*s*., or any other sum, at a time when it would be most unwise to do so, but by degrees it did away altogether with restrictions and all advantage to the home grower. Upon the whole, therefore, he considered the right hon. Baronet's plan a well-digested, well-concocted, and simple plan, which could not produce the bad effects prophesied of it, and which he trusted would not reduce the price of corn. It was said that the Corn-laws deranged the currency of the country; but that the fact was quite the reverse was a matter to be easily proved. It was very well known that high prices had nothing to do, or very little to do, with the reward the labourer got for his labour. There was a time when corn was 120*s*. and 130*s*. the quarter, he believed the price on one occasion reached to 133*s*. and the country was never in a more flourishing state. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Macaulay) had mentioned the time of Bonaparte, and stated how difficult it was to restrain the importation of corn into this country from countries under his dominion at a time when Bonaparte did all in his power to prevent it. It was shipped for this country notwithstanding all his attempts at restriction; but the hon. Gentleman should remember that, however large the supply thus obtained, and whatever its effect on the price of food, it did not matter one farthing to the labourer. At that time the labourers were all well off and fully employed, and 120*s*. was the average price per quarter for corn. It was clear that the monied price was one thing, and the real price another: and it was quite a delusion to say, that there was connection between the price of corn and the price of labour, for the price of labour, like everything else, must be dependent upon the number of competitors in the market, and the proportion existing between the supply of labour and the demand. The wealth of this country, both agricultural and manufacturing, had increased in a most extraordinary degree. They could go nowhere without seeing improvement, notwithstanding all the distress in the country. The situation of the people did not depend on humanity or generosity; it was not in the power of the manufacturers to give the wages they might wish to give. However wealthy the country, however fast its wealth increased, the fact was, that the number of labourers was so great, that the share of wages which came into the hands of each man was too small for his wants, and on that, and that alone, depended the distressed condition of the labouring classes of the country. How they would remedy that distress, was a mighty question that could not be considered in connection with the subject now under discussion; but with respect to the latter question, he contended that the money-price of corn did not matter one straw to the labourer. The great superabundance of labour in England was caused to a great extent by the continual inundation of labourers from Ireland; if it were not for that our people would be almost as well off as their best wishers could require. Nor was it true that the great bulk of the manufacturing people employed in mills were not well off and comfortable in their circumstances. A few years ago he (Sir F. Burdett) visited Manchester and other places in the manufacturing districts, in consequence of large bodies of Conservative operatives inviting him to their meetings, and there he sat down to very excellent dinners, given by the operatives themselves, who were an intelligent, well behaved body, expressing themselves in an extraordinary manner, with great good sense and judgment. And among the master manufacturers he found enlightened, generous men. He had previously been little in the manufacturing districts, and he certainly had formed a lower opinion of them than from subsequent intercourse he now had. There were many reasons for the distress prevailing among the manufacturers. One was the habit of having money advanced them by banks; and the system was so difficult to manage, that the honestest man might be ruined, and if one were ruined it was felt in the whole district; one failure produced many others. He was satisfied then that no part of the distress in the commercial world, or among the labourers, of late years, depended at all on the Corn-law, which for years had not interrupted a large importation of, and a regular trade in corn, notwithstanding all that had been advanced to the contrary. The fact was, that the population of this country had got beyond the means of subsistence; and when people talked of having bread cheap, let them go to other countries and see that bread. Some time ago, a large body of Conservatives asked him to meet them at Wolverhampton; he did so, and not only met workmen fully employed and well paid, but men who had once been workmen, and had made large fortunes by their industry. One of these in particular he remembered—he was a Mr. Thornecroft, who had risen from the humblest situation in a foundry to be one of the greatest foundry proprietors in the neighbourhood of Birmingham. And this was not an uncommon thing. Mr. Thornecroft told him what he now said, that he admitted there was distress; but he stated also that at least two-thirds of the working people were extremely well off and comfortable; and he hoped and believed that this was the case with the bulk of the labouring classes of this country. Cases might be pointed out of counties where, from mismanagement of the old Poor-law, there had been an accumulation of poverty; but he meant to say that, on the whole, there was not such a mass of people, possessing every enjoyment which life could afford, with every degree of liberty fitted to human nature, as had existed and must exist in this country, in any other part of the world. Now, as to the landed interest, he would say that there was no set of people in the world more liberal, just, and honourable than they; he had heard this sentiment expressed when he was abroad, and even in France, notwithstanding the late untoward act of the French ministry, which was considered an insult to this country. Than the landed interest, he was certain, there was no interest in the country so easy to govern, and no interest that was so willing to submit to the principles of public utility and to honest measures for the public good; so much so, indeed, that he was happy to say he believed the right hon. Baronet might consider himself fixed in his present position for a very long period.

Lord *Duncan* did not intend to follow the inflammatory topics contained in the speech of the hon. Gentleman, nor did he mean to question his affection for the landed aristocracy, though he once evinced a very different feeling towards the aristocracy generally. How was old Cato changed. The hon. Member's ideas had undergone an extraordinary transformation since he appeared on his knees, at the Bar of that House:

> "Hei mihi! qualis erat quantum mutatus ab illo
> Hectore qui vidit exuvias invictus Achilles."

He cordially supported the amendment of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, because, in so doing, he should evince, in the strongest manner, his opposition to the measure proposed by the right hon. Baronet. He objected to that measure, not so much in detail, as in principle. He was one of those who contended, that the Government was made for the people, and not the people for the Government. The Government might impose what taxes it pleased, but the taxes ought to be laid equally on all classes of the community, and no Minister of this country had a right to come down to the House of Commons, and state that protection was the foundation of a measure—protection to one class, be it observed, at the expense of another—a Minister, he repeated, was not justified in stating, that protection was the foundation of a measure intended to apply to the taxation of this great empire. It was with surprise he had heard the right hon. Baronet say, that Parliament ought to deal lightly with an interest which had been created and supported in this country for hundreds of years. Did not the right hon. Baronet perceive, that every year that protection was maintained, the difficulty of dealing with the subject was increased? If protection must be maintained, he thought, that the right hon. Baronet, with the majority which he had in the House, might just as well have retained the existing Corn-laws. Let the House look back, not 100 or 150 years, but six centuries ago, and they would find, that in this country, there had always existed a spirit, that would not brook partial and unjust taxation. The Barons of England assembled on the plain of Runnymede, and unsheathed their swords to resist unjust taxation. Two hundred years ago, Pym, Selden, and Hampden stood at the Bar of that House, arguing against monopolies. In more modern times, the principle of unjust taxation lost us America. We founded our empire in India on the plea of protecting the natives from unjust taxation; thus we acquired an empire in the east, by repudiating the principles which lost us one in the west. If there were any hon. Gentlemen opposite, who were not yet convinced of the impolicy of monopoly, and the impossibility of maintaining it, he would refer them to the speech of the right hon. Baronet, delivered last week. Would they, after that speech, be content to rest the privileges of the aristocracy of this country on the principle of protection to agriculture? During the last century and a half, intelligence had made great progress amongst the humbler classes of the people. Look into the cottage of the labourer, and it would be found, that tea and tobacco, formerly the luxuries of the few, now constituted the comforts of the many, and lying upon the counter of the mechanic's shop, might now be seen books which once could be met with only in the royal closet, or the libraries of nobles. Follow the mechanic to a public meeting—to the Crown and Anchor, if you please—and hear him discuss the question whether wages depend more on the demand for labour than the price of food. Let the mechanic's speech be compared with the speeches delivered in that House, making allowance for the difference in education between the speakers, and then he would ask, whether the aristocracy of England were willing to rest their claim to the situation they held in society, on protection to agriculture? Ought the aristocracy—and he was one of them—to found a claim to distinction on such grounds? Ought they to struggle for a miserable pittance, which their ancestors would have scorned to beg, and spurned to take? He appealed to the aristocracy to follow the bright example of their progenitors. He appealed to them, as one of themselves. He appealed, not to the right hon. Baronet, the Member for East Kent—he appealed not to a Cabinet Minister, who, in the nineteenth century, when the manufacturing interest was wavering in the balance, could come down to that House, and indulge in speculations on the protection to be given to home-grown tobacco. If those were the leaders of the agriculturists of England, he would advise the latter to discard them immediately, or they would bitterly regret it. There was not a moment to be lost: —

> ———Vivendi rectè qui prorogat horam,
> Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis; at illa
> Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.

He appealed to the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel), by the name he bore—*clarum ac venerabile nomen gentibus*—and if he were an inhabitant of Manchester, he would add, *et multum nostræ quod proderat urbi*—he appealed to the right hon. Baronet by the name he bore—a name written in letters of gold in the annals of his country—he appealed to him as the first Minister of the first commercial country in the world, having a large majority in that and the other House of Parliament, now that he saw the manufacturing interest in a state of extreme distress, to exert himself to afford them relief, and not to turn the petitioning people dissatisfied from the doors of Parliament, by giving them a stone, when they were begging for bread. The right hon. Baronet had asked for advice. He would tender him his advice. It might be worth nothing, but he would give it without a fee. He would advise the right hon. Baronet to trust to the generosity of the people of England, and not to the tender mercies of his Prætorian guards.

Mr. *Stanton* said, that if he thought the amendment of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton was calculated to relieve the overwhelming distress of the working classes, he should have supported it. But he believed, that its effect, if carried out practically, would be to aggravate those evils, and to depress trade. He believed it would strike a panic through the country, by which additional thousands of the labouring population would be thrown out of employ, and, therefore, he should oppose the amendment. He must confess, however, that the sliding-scale of the right hon. Baronet was highly objectionable, and he believed, that under its operation, the prices of corn would be seen to rise. The right hon. Baronet, the Member for East Kent (Sir Edward Knatchbull) opposed a fixed duty, because he did not think it would operate beneficially in times of scarcity; but he (Mr. Stanton) did not see why that objection did not apply equally to the sliding-scale of the right hon. Baronet, the Member for Tamworth. It had been said, that the landed interest had been unfairly denounced; but he had not been a party to decry them. On the contrary, he held, that they ought to be spoken of and treated with the highest respect; for he looked upon them as the Corinthian capital, and felt, that it would be the greatest misfortune to the country, if that interest was injured, for then, indeed, the base of the column must fall with the ruins of the superstructure.

Mr. *P. M Stewart* said, he should have been unwilling to deviate from that course which he had hitherto observed on this subject, of giving a silent vote; but he stood there the representative of a county which contained an extensive combination of all the interests of agriculture, commerce, and manufactures. There was one fact to which he was anxious to advert, mentioned in the speeches of hon. Gentlemen opposite last night, and it had been also touched upon by the hon. Baronet the Member for Wiltshire, (Sir F. Burdett) that night, but more particularly in the speech of the hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth, in his speech on Wednesday—he alluded to the appeals which had been made to them on behalf of the agricultural interest and the labouring population of England. Hon. Gentlemen must all have felt the force of those appeals, but surely the effort was unnecessary; for he did not think that any man in his senses would do anything to injure interests which were so essential to the well-being and existence of the country. He held all interests, whether agricultural, commercial, or manufacturing, to be bound up together and to be materially dependent on each other. If they were placed in such a situation as to be forced to make a preference, he believed that their choice would fall upon those who were occupied in agriculture, the producers of that which formed the staple of human existence. The House, however, could pass no law affecting any one of these interests which would not affect them all; and he would say in the wise words of the right hon. Baronet, that the best protection which agriculture could enjoy was in the continued prosperity of our trade and manufactures." He had not had the advantage of hearing the speech of the right hon. Baronet, but he could not describe the surprise and consternation with which it had been read in the county which he had the honour to represent. The surprise was great that the right hon. Baronet should have denied that much of that distress which prevailed was attributable to the operation of the pernicious corn and provision laws; and the consternation was equally great at the scheme which had been propounded to the House, in the present state of the country. It could not but be lamented, that the judgment of the right hon. Gentleman differed so much from that of persons who were intimately acquainted with these scenes of suffering. The right hon. Baronet had said, that the operation of the existing Corn-laws was not the main cause of the prevailing distress, and that it had not much to do with it, and that there were concurrent causes which had led to that distress; and amongst these he had adverted to the derangement of affairs in our commercial intercourse with the United States of America. He said also that this distress arose partly from the war in the Mediterranean and in China; and certainly he agreed with the right hon. Baronet that these causes had something to do with the present commercial pressure. But no man, he thought, no practical man of judgment, who could form a clear, unbiassed opinion, could deny that the main cause of this universal distress was the blighting pressure of our restrictive commercial policy, and more especially the operation of that pernicious law which was now upon its trial. He knew not what proof the right hon. Baronet and the Government could desire of this fact, and he must, therefore, refer to the petitions which had been presented, because an hon.

Gentleman had yesterday animadverted on those petitions in a way which was unbecoming. He would throw overboard those petitions which had emanated from the poor unfortunate operatives, and he would allude to those of master manufacturers, who declared that they were obliged to discharge these people because the markets were closed up, and their trade had withered and was stagnant. Then there were petitions from the richest landowners of Scotland, who told them that the misery of the manufacturing and commercial interests had extended itself to the land, and they prayed the Legislature to repeal those laws, of which hon. Gentlemen opposite were so tenacious. The noble Lord (Lord Stanley) and the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department, (Sir James Graham) knew of one petition at least which clearly refuted the assertion that the present distress had no reference to the Corn-laws. He referred to a conference he had the other day with the right hon. Member for Tamworth, accompanied by the noble Lord and the right hon. Gentleman. The petition which he had presented declared that the starving people were situated in the midst of plenty—that they were placed in the midst of bonding warehouses filled with corn, and the prayer of the petitioners was, "Unlock the bonded warehouse doors; give us food at the cost at which it has been admitted, and deduct the duty." He maintained it was impossible to deny the connection between the state of the present law, and the state of the country. A little incident had occurred to him that morning, illustrative of this fact. He had seen an industrious person who traded to Hamburgh, and dealt in mariners' instruments. This man declared that, in the absence of any relaxation of the Corn-laws, he could earn scarcely enough to keep his family; but that by removing the restrictions on the corn and provision laws, he should be enabled to extend his trade and to command double the quantity of food for his family, by buying it in Hamburgh. He was confident that the scheme proposed by the right hon. Baronet, would utterly fail in affording relief to the country. In every important particular, he believed, that the measure of the Government was calculated to hinder and obstruct trade, to damage the best interests of the country, by deranging our currency, and to be as pernicious as the law it was intended to succeed. In the speech of the right hon. Baronet, he had justified on two principles alone the protection which he sought to give the landed interests. These were, first, the special burdens borne by the landed interest; and secondly, that it might be worth while to pay something to render our own country independent of foreign supply. He wished to bring these principles to the test. With regard to the first, he was not going to trouble the House with what had been already previously stated, but he would put before them, in simple figures, the real state of the account of the special burdens borne by the landed interest. Now, he admitted the item of the land tax, 1,200,000*l.* The next item was tithes. He denied that tithes were a burden on the land. He was not a political economist, nor versed in their phraseology, about "the incidents of tithe," but applying common sense to the word "tithe," he asked how could it be reckoned a burden upon land? If he bought an estate subject to tithe, he bought nine-tenths of it and paid nothing for the rest, therefore, he said, in plain language that he was joint proprietor of the estate to the extent of nine-tenths, and that the proprietor of the remaining one-tenth had as much a right to regard the nine-tenths as belonging to him, as he had to regard the remaining one-tenth as his own property. Next came the poor and county-rates, but both imposts rested on the basis of property. He had found an analysis of the poor and county-rates levied in proportion to property, in 1826. The rates were levied upon land and houses, and although the landed interest might pay the larger amount, still it was in proportion to the value of the property. In 1826, the rates levied upon lands and manorial profits were 4,892,000*l.*, and those upon houses and mills were 2,074,000*l.*, making a total of 6,966,000*l.* Upon this item, therefore, there was a difference against the landed interest of 2,818,000*l.* From 1826 to 1834, the rate had increased, he presumed in the same proportions; but owing to the wise administration of the new Poor-law, it had since gradually decreased, and was this year within a fraction of what it was in 1826, namely 6,966,000*l.* He contended, then, that although the landed interest contributed largely to the poor and county-rates, they did not contribute more than was justified by the additional value of the property on which the rates were charged. Land was subject to the stamp duty on deeds, &c., and in 1839, this amounted to 1,699,000*l.* Of that sum we may assume that 699,000*l.* were paid upon houses, bonds, and other personal contracts, leaving one million borne by the land. He now begged the attention of the landowners, while he alluded to the taxes borne by other property. In 1839, there was paid on the succession to personal property to the amount of 40,000,000*l.*, for legacy and probate duty a sum amounting to 2,017,000*l.* Now if real property were subject to the same duty—on succession it would probably amount to 2,500,000*l.* He would prove it thus:—he estimated the rental of the kingdom at nearly 50,000,000*l.* the purchase of that at twenty-five years would be 1,250,000,000*l.*, and the duty on the succession to that, one-twenty-fifth part at 5 per cent. would be 2,500,000*l.* The account then stood thus:—special burdens on the land 1,200,000*l.*; special exemptions 2,500,000*l.* He would say nothing of the large remission of duties in relief of landed interests amounting to nearly 1,000,000*l.*, nor anything about the tax which the Corn-laws imposed on the community, but he had stated thus much to show, as far as an imperfect outline would allow, that the argument in support of protection, on account of special burdens borne by the agriculturists, was to a great degree unfounded. With respect to the other proposition, that we should pay something to become independent of foreign countries, he would ask the right hon. Baronet did he think that was possible in the present state of the country? Not to advert to the able speech of the noble Lord, the Member for Tiverton, nor to the statement of the right hon. Baronet himself, that since the operation of the present Corn-law 13,000,000 quarters had been imported, and for the last two years 2,500,000 quarters annually, he would take up a previous opinion expressed by the right hon. Baronet, and ask him to reconcile it with his recent statement. He found that in 1828 Mr. Secretary Peel had held a directly opposite doctrine, and said,

> "There was another circumstance that had not been adverted to during the present discussion. It would not be denied, that in consequence of the growing population of the country, there was a necessity for looking to other countries for supply. It was impossible not to see, that in proportion to the increased population of late years, the quantity of land employed in the production of corn was diminished by being appropriated to the production of more profitable articles. The increase of manufactures must diminish the growth of corn, but it did not follow that agriculture must be, therefore, depressed. If it were proved to him that there was less corn grown in this country than formerly, he would not admit that agriculture was less flourishing. It was quite clear, that Great Britain did not produce sufficient corn for its own consumption."

That was the statement of the right hon. Baronet in 1828. A few nights since, however, the right hon. Baronet expressed himself in quite a different manner. He said,—

> "In considering this question, it becomes important to ascertain what is the probability that this country, from its own resources, can be able to supply its own population. Now, I am not prepared to admit that this country is unable, in ordinary years, to supply its own population. It would be too much to infer, that the population has so rapidly increased, with reference to the production of subsistence, that you must abandon altogether the hope of deriving your supplies from your own fields."

The opinion expressed in the latter extract was diametrically opposed to those contained in the former, although in the interval which had elapsed between their delivery, the population of this country had considerably increased. They ought to require from the right hon. Baronet some explanation on the subject; and why, contrary to his previously declared opinion, he stood up now for protection, demanding it on the ground that it was worth while to pay something, to be independent of foreign countries. He confessed, after the interminable discussions they had had on this question for many years past, that he thought the right hon. Baronet, placed as he was, at the head of so strong a Government, would have produced a better and stronger measure than the one he had offered to the House. The right hon. Vice-President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Gladstone), in an admirable speech, too good for so bad a cause—had given force and weight to several arguments in its favour which, of themselves, were worth nothing. He would pass over those arguments that had already been disposed of, but he must say, that he was astonished to hear the right hon. Gentleman employ as an argument against any material relaxation of our commercial system, the fact that the Russian tariff was never so stringent against us as at this moment. If the right hon. Gentleman would search the records of his own office, he would find that the Russian tariff was one of the most striking monuments of the evils of our system that could anywhere be found, and that it was not until we refused to receive their flax, and tallow, and timber, and corn, except under high duties, thus forcing them to become manufacturers, and independent of us—save for one article, and that almost a raw material, cotton twist—that they framed that tariff in retaliation, which the right hon. Gentleman employed as an argument for maintaining the very system that produced it. The right hon. Gentleman appeared to have been wandering among the ruins of former Corn-laws: but unlike other historians among ruins he had not come forth to write the "decline and fall" of the sliding scale. The right hon. Gentleman's attention had been attracted, (he was sorry to say to so little purpose) to the act of 1772. The preamble ran thus:—

> "Whereas, it has been found by experience, that the restraints laid by several statutes upon the dealing in corn, meal, flour, and other sundry sorts of victual, by preventing a free-trade in the said commodities, have a tendency to discourage the growth, and enhance the price of the same, which statutes, put into execution, would bring great distress on the inhabitants of many parts of this kingdom."

That was the preamble to the act of 1772, and for twenty years after the passing of that act, the object was accomplished, for which they were now legislating so unwisely,—namely, stability in the price of corn; for he believed, that the period of the greatest stability in the price of corn in this country, was, during the existence of the Corn-laws, that ruled from 1772 to 1791. The right hon. Baronet, the Member for Dorchester, had closed his speech on a recent evening, by saying, that he felt a fixed duty would be absolutely dangerous; but that had not always been the opinion of the right hon. Baronet. He would quote the right hon. Baronet's own words in reply to the noble Lord, the Member for London.

> "The noble Lord," said the right hon. Baronet, "has enunciated a very distinct opinion, but he enunciated one formerly quite as distinct, and quite as opposed to this."

The right hon. Baronet was now precisely in the position in which he had attempted to place the noble Lord. He found the following observation in a work which he regarded as a hand-book on this subject, entitled, "*Corn and Currency.*"

> "It is impossible to permit any legislative enactment to continue, that has a tendency to degrade and impoverish the working classes; yet such is the effect of the present Corn-laws."

That was written in 1827. The book went on to say,—

> "The paramount duty of every Government is attention to the interests of the community, of which the labourers must form the great majority. The right of Government was instituted, not for the few, who possess wealth and honor, but for the majority, who have them not. If the majority want food, private property becomes a nuisance. The least objectionable mode of procuring a regular supply of corn, at a fair market price, is by the repeal of the Corn-laws, and the imposition of a moderate fixed duty, equivalent to the burdens borne by the land."

Now, nothing could be more clearly "enunciated" than that. With respect to a fixed duty, the only opportunity he had had of voting in favour of it, was on a motion by Mr. Hume, in 1833, for a fixed duty, with a view to a free-trade in corn, and he believed the hon. Baronet, the Member for Wiltshire, (Sir F. Burdett) had voted with him on that occasion, notwithstanding his horror at such a plan, expressed this night. The opinion of Mr. Huskisson had been claimed by both sides of the House, and great deference to it expressed by all, but he claimed Mr. Huskisson's authority on the ground of one of the last opinions he had expressed on this subject. In 1827, Mr. Huskisson said, that

> "He should be prepared in the next Session to concur in some measure for a fixed duty at a certain rate, to be gradually reduced, so that the supply from foreign countries might come in at a fair level. He believed, the intention of the British Legislature was to give the British farmer the monopoly of the home market for a period, to compensate him for loss that he had sustained, but he thought, by the end of the next Session, that period would be completed."

On that principle, he then stood. He would vote heartily for the motion of his hon. Friend, the Member for Wolverhampton, and he did so as the representative of a constituency, interested neither abstractedly nor remotely in landed property, but directly so, to a very large amount. He had presented several petitions from many very wealthy proprietors, who all prayed for the measure which he was then supporting. But let him not be misunderstood. If the landed interest had special burdens, let them make out their account, and for their special burdens, let a special remedy be found, but let them not be relieved by a tax on the bread of the people. In Scotland, they had nothing to fear from a free-trade in corn; and he had heard that evening, from the hon. Member for Kerry (Mr. M. J. O'Connell), that Ireland had nothing to fear from it. He owned, he thought England had something to apprehend, for there was much to mend in the bad system of agriculture pursued in England. He hoped, the English portion of the landowners in that House would not take offence at his saying that, as compared with Scotland, their's was too often the field of the sluggard, and that the agriculturists of England might repair thither, and find instruction in their art, which, by adopting, would enable them to increase the produce of their land by at least one-fourth beyond its present account. The hon. Member for Canterbury, who said he had studied the subject of the Corn-laws, appeared to him to be in a fair way of adding hereafter to the ranks of the Anti-Corn-law advocates. The hon. Member had praised every legislative measure on the subject of corn, which had been enacted during the last three quarters of a century, commencing with the bill of Lord North, (who he had declared to be entitled to the gratitude of the nation for that measure) of 1772; thence he had glanced at the act of 1828, the authors of which he had also lauded. He afterwards touched on the fixed duty proposed by the noble Lord, the Member for London, commending the principle of it, and he had concluded by declaring his entire approbation of the measure brought forward by the right hon. Baronet, the Member for Tamworth. The hon. Member was certainly a most hopeful disciple, who could thus shower indiscriminate praise upon four different measures, each resting upon a distinct and different principle. In the year 1815, a law was introducod on the subject of the importation of corn, which was expressly devised for the purpose of conciliating those parties who had suffered from the previous depressed state of their branch of production, and yet what was the result of that bill, and in what manner did it go out of operation? Mr. Huskisson said, with respect to it, that from the bottom of his soul, he lamented the ruin that had been entailed upon so many persons in consequence of the fluctuation of prices under the law of 1815, and during the operation of which corn had been at lower quotations than it would have been under a perfectly free-trade in it. He would not go into the particulars of the discussion, which took place when the bill of 1828 was introduced, but he would only remark, that the right hon. Baronet had lavished the same praises verbatim on that law that he now poured out so profusely upon the measure before the House. He protested against the continuance of a system which was alike a fraud upon the landed interests and the consumers of the agricultural produce of the country, as well as most pernicious to her commerce and manufactures, The question, in order to be set finally at rest, must be placed upon a principle altogether opposite to the principle upon which the present bill was founded. He was not astonished to find, that the country at large was dismally disappointed in the measure brought forward by the Government, when so poor and unsatisfactory a scheme was the only result of such a long deliberation. The time taken for deliberation, the mysterious silence which had been maintained, whilst the mountain was in labour, the throes of which were so great as to detach some noble fragments, and then the miserable mouse which had crept forth in the shape of these resolutions, at once the object of ridicule and of fearful indignation to the people of this country. He would warn the promoters of the measure not to flatter themselves that they would be any nearer a final settlement of the Corn-law question after it should be passed than they now were. The Bill would, he had no doubt, become the law of the land in progress of time; but when it had taken its place on the Statute Book, what could it prove else, than, like its precurser in the page—a cause of commercial derangement—a source of nation distress—and, as such, an object of unabated national discontent.

Mr. *Wodehouse* looked upon the proposition of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton to be a perfectly fair subject for discussion, and he was quite ready to admit, that the Corn-laws were only defensible upon general grounds. He would be contented to base his defence of them upon the principle that if they were found to have worked for the general prosperity, then, and then only, they ought to be preserved. On what did the landholders rest their case? On the evidence of the last fifteen years, which would show, that the political, naval, commercial, and agricultural ascendancy of Great Britain had taken their rise from the moment when the principle of protection to the landed interests was recognised—namely, from 1792 to 1815. It could be proved by the records, that the export of wheat from England, antecedently to the close of the great colonial struggle with America, had been nearly balanced by the imports, and that from the year 1792 to 1815 the imports of wheat into England from all Europe put together, did not amount to more than half a million of quarters, and from America a quarter of a million. If, therefore, the people of England were not sustained during this period, by the produce of their own soil, how were they fed? And let it be recollected, that in the years from 1792 to 1815, four of them were years of famine, and during the greater period, there had been a constant range of high prices. He would take that opportunity of bringing to the recollection of the House what the right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Edinburgh, had said last evening, in touching upon this topic. The right hon. Gentleman had stated, that it was better to rely on a permanent than on a casual supply of food from abroad, for that then the supply would be more certain; and he had referred in particular as an exemplification of his argument to the importation of wheat that had taken place in 1810 from France and the Continent. He had felt extreme surprise on hearing the right hon. Gentleman make particular reference to that year, without offering any allusion or explanation of the circumstances by which the importation of wheat into England at that period was characterised. The sudden influx of corn at that time was owing to the permission which Napoleon gave to the generals of his army to become traders in corn—a proceeding by which they were enabled to amass large fortunes. The proof of this assertion was to be found in the fact, that Dantzic had been taken possession of by France in 1806, and had remained in her power until 1813. During those eight years, the importation from the eight principal states of Europe, — namely, Prussia, Sweden, Denmark, Russia, Germany, Holland, Flanders, and France, was as follows:—The total amount of wheat imported in 1806 from all the countries he had named, was 112,000 quarters, the price being 76*s.* and 78*s.*; in 1807, it was 76,000, the price being 73*s.*; in 1808, the amount was only 6,000 quarters, the price being 78*s.*; in 1809, it was 189,000, the price being 94*s.*; and, in the March following, in 1810, the amount of wheat imported was 1,292,000 quarters, the price being still 94*s.* So that it was true, quite true, that this quantity of corn had been imported into England in 1810, as stated by the right hon. Member for Edinburgh; but it had been done under peculiar circumstances, by permission of Napoleon, to answer a certain purpose, which had succeeded. In the following year, 1811, the quantity of wheat imported dropped down again to 166,000 quarters, the price being 92*s.*; and, in the year 1812, which was remembered to the present day in Yorkshire as the dear year, the imports did not amount to 100,000 quarters in all, the price of wheat being 122*s.* In 1813, the whole amount imported from abroad was 339,000 quarters, and, taking the average of the years he had mentioned, the annual importation of wheat did not exceed 300,000 quarters, notwithstanding that in 1810 the enormous quantity of near 1,500,000 had been poured into the country. This certainly did appear to him to be a curious argument upon which to base an opinion that it was better to rely upon foreign countries for a permanent supply of wheat than to take it casually as at present. And before he dismissed this topic, let him call the attention of the House to what occurred in 1801, when the King of Prussia had openly declared, and had put his seal to the declaration, that he would keep his duty upon wheat up to the full mark of English prices; and that if they continued high in England, the duty should remain high in Prussia; but that if they fell, the duty also should be moderated. And this was the reason why the right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Edinburgh, would prefer relying permanently upon other countries for the food of the people. A great deal had been said about the peculiar burdens which the land supported, and he was ready to admit, that he asked for protection on no other grounds than on that single one. It would be recollected, that the hon. Member for Southwark had on a former occasion expressed an opinion, that the agriculturists thought they were entitled to some compensation for the mortgages and settlements, and other dead weight upon their rentals, in case the protection should be diminished or taken entirely away. This would be rather a difficult question to settle, and the mention of it revived in his mind the recollection of a former period when some wrangling had taken place in the House upon the same topic, of the protection afforded to the landed interests, and the relative proportion of the direct burdens of taxation borne by them, and that supported by the commercial interests. He had challenged Mr. George Phillips, the present Sir George Phillips, to call for returns distinguishing the relative amounts borne by each class of persons, and when he had asserted that the return was made, he would prove from it, that the land bore by far the heaviest portion of the burden. When the paper was laid upon the Table of the House it was found, that the land bore 4,500,000*l.*, the small householders about 1,000,000*l.*, whilst the sum of 300,000*l.*, and no more, was charged as the proportion paid by the commercial and manufacturing interest. When the return came back to the House Mr. Phillips exclaimed, that there must be some mistake in it, to which he and his party replied by a challenge to try again; the paper was once more sent to the proper quarter to be revised, and when it came a second time before the House it exhibited precisely the same results, and from that moment he had never heard a syllable more upon the subject of the burdens borne exclusively by the land. That was a very good test, and by this test the landholders were prepared to stand. Again, the question of wages had been introduced into the arguments of hon. Gentlemen opposite, and they were said not to keep pace with the price of provisions. How could it be expected that this would, or could, ever be the case? But wages had so far progressed, that from 1792 to 1815 their amounts had been doubled. It was true that rents had doubled within that period; but it was also true that wages had doubled. He would next proceed to notice the argument which stated, that the present system of Corn-laws opposed great and permanent obstructions to commerce. He did not undervalue the commercial interests of England; but let him ask if the Corn-laws were to be treated as an obstruction to the free interchange of commodities, at what point was the reciprocity on the part of England to stop? There was, he admitted, a necessity to relax the import duty upon wheat, inasmuch as it formed a principal portion of the food of man; the same might be said of oats, as also forming part of the food of man; but he was not prepared to admit that this argument applied to barley, which was no part of our food. He trusted, that even his opponents on this occasion would admit, that he was a man who would not sacrifice his sincere conviction to an ambition to obtain a fleeting and unsubstantial popularity. Yet he would say, that the Legislature ought especially to keep in mind, that in protecting one acre of barley they would effectually keep up the protection of wheat, and thereby keep up the heart of our soil. Let them read with attention the whole of the correspondence before the House upon the subject of the capabilities of Denmark for producing barley in great abundance from, as Campbell sung—

> "Thy wild stormy steep, Elsinore."

to the extreme verge of that country. With these facts staring them in the face, he presumed they must be led to the inference, that the agricultural interest ought not to be deprived of a fair share of protection. Indeed, in his mind, the proposition was so self-evident, that to pass a law or a resolution of that House, in contradiction to that great principle, would neither be in accordance with virtue, sense, or dignity.

Dr. *Bowring* said, having been present at the last meeting but one of the deputies representing the Prussian League, who had assembled at Berlin to consider the modification of the British and Prussian tariff, he had had the opportunity of discussion with those representatives, and he might, therefore, correct some misconceptions as to the result of the mission which had been confided to him. He had had occasion to make several reports to her Majesty's Government, and the result of those reports was, that the Prussian Government was willing to meet the amicable proposition of which he was supposed to be the bearer. They were disposed to entertain the general question of the modification of that tariff, which regulated the commercial affairs of 24,000,000 of population, and to listen to any proposition which the British Government might be disposed to put forward, provided it was likely to extend the English market for the consumption of their agricultural produce. That extension, so far as in them laid, they were willing to consent to, by a modification of their own tariff, provided the British Government would undertake in return to modify the duties on certain articles, which acted repulsively upon the produce of the German states. The principal article was corn, and, at that time, a moderate mixed duty on corn, would have induced the Prussian Government to listen to proposals for important changes in the tariffs of the commercial league. Next in importance was timber, on which the British Government was, at that period, disposed to attempt a reduction of duty, but he believed the events in Canada had produced some change in their sentiments as to the opportunity of then proposing changes to Parliament. In fact, it was the conviction, that the House of Commons would not consent to any important changes in the imports on foreign corn and timber, which led to the failure of his mission to Berlin. He would no doubt have obtained some beneficial change to be made, conditional on their acceptance by the House of Commons, but that House had shown little disposition to the relaxation of our protective system, especially as connected with the great monopolies of the land. Perhaps he might here be permitted to make a few remarks upon what he deemed the safe and substantial grounds upon which the hon. Member for Wolverhampton had based his motion. He, for one, rejoiced that that hon. Member had introduced into his proposition, that word which had been the stumbling-block of so many—he meant the word "now;" he rejoiced because that word presented the motion to the House in a simple but intelligible form. If he saw great suffering and distress surrounding him on all sides, and he were to be asked when he should relieve it, he would answer, now. If he saw a great grievance existing, and were to be asked when he would redress it, his answer would be, now. The moment to relieve misery was the moment when misery was discovered. If in the removal of this great grievance, which, in his opinion, was covering the land with wretchedness and starvation, he should see that some minor grievances would ensue from such removal, he, for one, was quite willing to take those grievances into consideration, and see what could be done for their redress. If it could be proved to him that injury would be inflicted upon the landed interest by a great justice being done to the consumer of the produce of the land, he was desirous to meet the landowners, endeavour to ascertain what was the amount of that injury, and most cordially and cheerfully apply himself to redress it. He thought that, in the course of this discussion, very little attention had been paid to what was taking place out of doors. Where was the public voice in favour of the present law? Where were the petitions and petitioners? Every hon. Gentleman had admitted that the present was a question of consummate gravity and importance, yet two petitions only, signed by less than 100 individuals, had been presented to the House in favour of the scheme proposed by the right hon. Baronet. But how stood the case on the other side? According to the last return laid upon the Table of the House, up to the 11th of February instant, there had been 1,694 petitions presented, signed by 427,666 persons—a number that had since increased to half a million—who expressed themselves dissatisfied with the present state of things, and almost unanimously demanded an immediate and total repeal of the Corn-laws. In that House also great progress had been made in the opinions even of hon. Members themselves upon this subject. In 1829, when Mr. Hume proposed a fixed duty of 20s. per quarter, there were only twelve Members who supported that proposition. In May, 1833, Mr. Whitmore's motion was negatived in a House of 411 Members by a majority of 199. In March, 1834, Mr. Hume again brought forward the question in a House of 467 Members, and was supported by a minority of 155. In March, 1836, 195 Members supported the motion of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton. In 1840, 177 Members voted with the same hon. Member; and on the 16th of February, 1842, in a House of 575 Members, 226 hon. Members declared their opinion that the present state of things ought not to be tolerated, and that the proposal of the right hon. Baronet could not be accepted as a solution of the question. He certainly did not expect that, either in or out of that House persons would be able to detach themselves at once from views of their own interests, or that certain prejudices born of those interests, should not have their natural effect upon them. He was, however, pleased to hear the tone in which several hon. Members had spoken of the distress that prevailed in the country. The distress in the manufacturing districts was all-pervading. What sad admission was now universally made, the distress, indeed, was forced upon their notice in every possible shape. Let the House look at the returns which exhibited the decreased consumption in the 150 market towns in England which furnished the averages. In 1836, 1837, and

1838, there were 12,346,000 quarters of corn consumed, making an annual average of 4,115,300 quarters; while in 1839, 1840, and 1841, the consumption was only 10,938,000 quarters, making the annual average of 3,646,000. These facts proved that in these 150 market towns there was a diminished consumption in three years of 469,300 quarters of wheat. When the hon. Member for Shropshire, spoke of the small amount of duty levied upon corn imported he seemed to have forgotten that the lower the duty the higher was the price. The less that entered into the Treasury the more fell into the pockets of the home producer, and the greater amount was paid by the consumer. The hon. Member for Shropshire had said that the tax was a small one, for it only amounted to five farthings a week upon each person. But that hon. Gentleman ought to recollect that many documents existed showing that there were hundreds of thousands of individuals who did not even earn 1*s.* per week. Consequently, the five farthings per head was an income tax of near 10 per cent. upon those who were in such unfortunate circumstances. The right hon. Secretary for the Home Department had said the operation of the bill would be to give a protection of 14*s.* a quarter, which upon the estimated consumption of the country amounted to 18,900,000*l.* Now this 14*s.* per quarter was 30 per cent. tax upon the wages of poor persons. But that was not all, because to that sum must be added the cost of transport, which was 6*s.* more, and which, added to the protecting duty, according to the confession of hon. Gentlemen opposite, amounted to a tax upon the people of considerably more than 26,000,000*l.* sterling. The right hon. Member for Kent had represented that the land, so far from being privileged, was subject to peculiar burdens. Now it certainly appeared to him that the history of the land of this country was not a history of burdens, but rather of exemptions. He complained that tobacco could not be grown in this country. Would the right hon. Baronet be willing to pay 3*s.* a pound on all the tobacco grown upon English soil, that being the amount now levied upon the foreign commodity? Take an illustration, A new interest had grown up in France by the cultivation of beet-root for the purpose of converting it into sugar; and most sensibly and with a wise anticipation did Lord Sydenham lay a duty of 24*s.* upon beet-root sugar, the produce of English cultivation. And the agriculturists had no right to complain of this, for if Lord Sydenham had not acted thus, no doubt much land in England would at this day have been appropriated to the cultivation of beet-root, and every hundred weight of English grown sugar would have extracted 24*s.* from the revenue of the country. Great progress had been made in agricultural knowledge, but he did not think it could be compared to the corresponding advance that was to be observed in manufactures. He did not see among the labouring classes of the agricultural population that improvement and intelligence which had so eminently distinguished persons engaged in manufacturing pursuits, and which had raised some of the latter from indigence to the highest ranks in society. Often might be found, the intelligent artisan elevated by his own intelligence and powers, but seldom did the man who had followed the plough become the possessor of the land on which he toiled. Amidst the manufacturing population, there existed a desire and thirst for information that were not to be found among agriculturists. Artisans had become opulent manufacturers, but where was the peasant who from agricultural skill and knowledge had become a landed proprietor? But was the land of this country so sterile—so unproductive as to authorise their owners to demand peculiar immunities? How stood the fact with respect to the produce of the land of this country as compared with others? He held in his hand the result of an examination that had been taken in France of forty-three departments east of Paris, containing an area of 64,000,000 acres, of which 6,280,000 were employed in the cultivation of wheat. Now, the production of these lands was fourteen bushels and 3·20 to an acre, and he found that of 77,000,000 of acres in the United Kingdom, 23,000,000 were estimated as arable, of which about 6,000,000 were employed in the cultivation of wheat, and gave twenty-eight bushels to the acre—a production nearly doubling that of France. Then what was the comparative tax upon these lands in France and in the United Kingdom? In France, the *impôt fourier*, one single land-tax only upon these forty-three departments, was about three millions sterling, being more than twice the amount of the whole land-tax of this country.

Many apprehensions had been expressed relative to the low price of corn abroad, and the horror of competition with countries when agricultural produce was of such little value. But the power of augmenting prices abroad was in the hands of the British Legislation who had only to say, "Open the ports of Great Britain, and the immediate result will be a rise to something lke the level of English prices. It was the buying country, and not the selling country that created the price. There were two species of proprietors who grew corn on the continent for exportation to this country. The great sources of supply were from lands held on feudal tenures, on which the peasants, the *adscripti glebæ* paid to the Lord a tribute, the portion of the produce which they did not consume, the increased power of production of this class of cultivators would be little affected by a change in our Corn-laws. Then came the small landed proprietors, who already employed such labour and capital as they could command. If the demand were increased, there might be a slow augmentation in the supply, but until these proprietors had materially increased their capital and labourers, they would have no means of sending a very large quantity to the market. Reference had been made to the sliding-scale of other countries, but would the right hon. Baronet give a sliding-scale similar to that existing elsewhere? The scale of France was more complicated than that of England, for in addition to the sliding duties the country was divided into four zones, in each of which a different system of duties prevailed. What was the state of the sliding-scale there? When corn was at 44*s.* per quarter, the duty was 9*s.* 6¼*d.*; and when it was above 58*s.* 3*d.*, the duty was 6*d.* per quarter, which was the minimum duty. What was the state of the scale in Holland? When the price was lower than 23*s.* 9*d.*, the duty was 14*s.* 3*d.*; when above 42*s.* 10*d.*, the duty was 1*s.* 2½*d.* The Dutch allowed, indeed, the principle recognised by the noble Lord, the Member for London; they admitted, that corn was a fit subject for taxation, but where was the tax collected? At the mill. And so he would say, if corn were to be taxed, let every sack of flour be delivered to the exciseman to take what was necessary for the purpose of the state revenue. That tax, however, had been a principal cause of the late revolution. It had alienated Holland from Belgium. A tax upon food was felt to be intolerable, and it brought with it terrible social, and political agitations. In Belgium, when the price was above 56*s.*, the importation of corn was duty free, under 34*s.* 8*d.* the duty was 13*s.* 5*d.*; and when the price was under 27*s.* 9*d.* importation was prohibited. Let hon. Members compare these scales with the English scale. With regard to the averages, he would ask the right hon. Baronet whether, if the new system of taking them were to lower the price of corn 4*s.* or 5*s.*, he would not be doing some injustice to those ecclesiastical interests, of which he was one of the most vigilant guardians, the tithe-commutation having been calculated upon the old scale? Was it well to unsettle all the elements upon which the arrangements of tithes had been made with the Church? Great injustice had been done to the people by allowing corn of an inferior quality, indeed, not fit for human consumption—to lower the averages, by being introduced into the returns, and he hoped the right hon. Baronet would consent that, for the future, the averages should be calculated only upon the corn that was suited for the food of man, and not upon corn that was wholly valueless. The hon. Member for Pomfret had stated, that the Prussian league had been a failure, and that so far from gaining power and strength, it was becoming weaker and weaker. But he saw clearly that that league would be strengthened as it had been strengthened by the resistance which that House opposed against the introduction of a moderate duty or free-trade altogether in corn. The influence of that league both politically and commercially, would be greatly extended by the progress of our own legislation. That league, he could tell the hon. Member, was becoming every day more powerful, and within the circle of that league free-trade, without restriction, without embarrassment, without a custom-house, existed among a population consisting of between 24,000,000 and 25,000,000. As a political and commercial event, he considered that league as one of the most important and instructive of the time. Much had been said, about the effect of machinery in reducing wages, but let hon. Members look at those handicrafts in which no machinery was employed, and they would discover whether there had not been a reduction of wages, a reduction greater than had been experienced in any of the branches with which machinery had interfered. Take shoe-making in London as an example. The shoemaker on men's work would now only get 13*s.* 6*d.* for his week's work of nine pair, subject to 1*s.* 6*d.* drawback for grindery, &c.; the closer 6*s.* for his thirty-six pair; and the binder the same. On women's work, the shoemaker would get 12*s.* 10*d.* for his fifteen pair; and the binder 3*s.* 9*d.* for her eighteen pair, subject to the drawback for grindery; but women, says a report from a master which he held in his hand, were actually going about crying for work at these prices [*Laughter*], at 1½*d.* per pair; and some manufacturers are paying only 1¼*d.* per pair. Women are making men's trousers for shops at 6*d.* per pair [*Renewed laughter*], waistcoats at 4½*d.* each, and shirts at 1½*d.* a piece. A master shoe-manufacturer, who employed from 100 to 200 hands per week, had said, that in 1812 (before the Corn-law), he paid his men from 2*l.* 10*s.* to 3*l.* per week, and women from 17*s.* 6*d.* to 28*s.* per week; for the same work he now pays the above 12*s.* 10*d.* and 3*s.* 9*d.* His attestation followed. Talk of machinery reducing the rate of wages indeed! What machinery is employed in making shirts and shoes? Or where is steam power applied to the manufacturing of trousers and waistcoats? Have wages fallen in any of the manufacturing districts equal to this. [*Interruption.*] He well knew that when hon. Members came down to that House to discharge a most painful duty by representing to the Legislature the sufferings and privations of the innocent and laborious, they must make up their minds to be received as he had even then been received. But the facts were notorious. He would, however, contrast the shouts that had that moment proceeded from the opposite side of the House, with the honourable testimony that had been borne by the right hon. Baronet opposite to the meritorious patience and fortitude with which the people had borne their suffering. The hon. Member for Bath had repudiated the idea of the Corn-law being a religious question, but he (Dr. Bowring) confessed he did not enter into the feeling of the hon. Member on that point. When every day in that House, before they proceeded with their daily duties, they uttered a prayer for daily bread, it occurred to him, that they would but be discharging their duties as legislators properly, in a Christian spirit, and in accordance with the spirit of that sublime prayer, if they inquired how they were to provide bread for those whose prosperity depended upon the results of their deliberation, if they asked whether they were carrying into the business of legislation those benevolent principles embodied in the words to which they professed to respond. It was written, that if even an enemy hungered, they were to feed him, and if he was naked, they were to clothe him. Now, he saw hundreds of thousands around him hungry and naked—not enemies—not strangers, but countrymen—deserving countrymen. The women of Manchester had been visited with opprobrious language. What was the position of the women of Manchester? What was the position of those who see around them a mass of intolerable distress, shall they not do what depends upon them to remove it? To whatever obloquy they might be subjected within that House, they would have an ample recompense within their own bosoms. And the House of Commons might be assured, that the interest which the women of England were showing on this all-important—this awful question, menaced the overthrow of all injustice, and would ultimately bring about the triumph which many hon. Members probably might anticipate with alarm. Out of this discussion, a new state of things was growing. His hon. Friend, the Member for Finsbury, was quite right in saying, that the hopelessness of the people, with reference to the reform of the Corn-laws, was producing at that moment a merging of all questions in a demand for great political changes. Out of doors the feeling existed, and was widely and rapidly spreading, that in that House there were many who represented the few, and only a few who represented the many; and until the interests of the many were attended to with more devotion than they had hitherto received, the demand for what was called organic change would become more clamorous. The middle classes and the labouring population would be fused into one mass; the pressure from without, of which the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) had recognised the power, would come again, and would penetrate even into that assembly; and the result would undoubtedly be another Parliamentary reform—a Parliamentary reform, the consequence of which would be the removal of that oppression which the people denounced as intolerable, (and which he thought they had proved within the walls of that House to be so),—which intolerable oppression would one day or other be wholly swept away.

Mr. *Benett* thought the plan proposed by the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government would have the effect of securing a more correct average of prices than was attainable under the present system. The hon. Member for Bolton had referred to the number of petitions which had been presented in favour of a total repeal of the Corn-laws. Notwithstanding, however, the great expense to which the Anti-Corn-law League had gone in endeavouring to get up petitions against the law,—notwithstanding all the exertions of the travelling orators who had been engaged by them, to go round the country and mislead the people, they had only been able to obtain 400,000 signatures to the petitions presented during the present year, whereas last year the number of petitioners in favour of repeal had been 1,300,000. This he thought a proof that some re-action had taken place in the public mind upon this subject. The fact was, that the operatives had now begun to see what effect the repeal of the Corn-laws would have in lowering their wages. He knew that the feeling of the agricultural labourers in the West of England was, that wages would be reduced if those laws were repealed. He was old enough to remember, when wages were no more than 6*s.* a week in that part of the country when the price of corn was low. As corn rose in price wages increased from 9*s.* to 12*s.*, and as the price again fell wages went down to 9*s.* at which they stood at the present time. With regard to the scheme of Corn-law now proposed, the question seemed to him to be whether this country was to import largely to the injury of the British farmer, or whether it should be admitted when it was required at a moderate price? He was of opinion that cheapness, occasioned by foreign import, would not be advantageous in supplying the deficiency of employment to the people. Upon every quarter of wheat grown in this country one pound was paid for labour, and if they imported 2,000,000 of quarters of foreign corn in the year, to that extent did they reduce the employment of the British labourer. It was idle to talk of preventing the competition of foreigners in manufactures by repealing the Corn-laws. Foreign countries had seen the advantages we had derived from manufactures, and having the means to do so, had entered into successful rivalry with us, and had in some cases almost supplanted us in the neutral markets, which they would continue to do until we reduced the rate of wages to their standard—viz., 5*d.* a day. Formerly Members opposite came forward fairly, and stated that a reduction in the rate of wages was their object—but it was not so now. They now contended that the repeal of the Corn-laws would not have the effect of lowering wages; but if not, in what way would the manufacturer be benefited?—He was an advocate for cheap corn, but he was also desirous that the poor should be enabled to purchase it. He did not believe that the measure of the right hon. Baronet would have the effect of keeping the price of corn at 56*s.* In conclusion, he hoped that those Gentlemen who had given notice of proposed amendments in the scale of the right hon. Baronet would see the propriety, if they really had the welfare of their country at heart, of throwing no obstructions in the way of the Government.

Mr. *Milner Gibson* observed, that the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had taunted the supporters of the Anti-Corn-law cause with having failed to get up such a number of signatures to petitions, as would show that a very considerable number of the people were in favour of Corn-law repeal. But if he were to infer from that remark of the hon. Gentleman, that any number of signatures would induce him to agree to a repeal of the Corn-laws, he was very much assured he should be greatly mistaken. He certainly agreed with the hon. Gentleman in one remark, that no person could hear inflammatory remarks without pain, and he, for one, come whence they would, must disapprove of attacks made merely for excitement. But at the same time, there were occasions, and this was one of them, in which it did become Members of that House to call things by their right names. This was one of those occasions upon which Members of that House would not be doing their duty unless they spoke up to their convictions; or if, from any fear of giving offence to the over-refined and over-delicate, they shrunk from declaring to the country from what they believed to be the nature and object of the law now proposed to them. There was one position, admitted by all sides of the House, with the exception, perhaps, of the right hon. Baronet the Paymaster of the Forces (Sir E. Knatchbull), which to his mind, was highly satisfactory; namely, that the Corn-laws could no longer be sustained for the benefit of a class; that they could only be sustained upon the ground of the general good. The hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, declared that he was of no class—that he was for the country. That was a most satisfactory statement. Hon. Gentlemen seemed now to begin to admit that the different orders of men had a right to exercise their industry in different ways, and to bring the produce of their industry into the markets of their country without obstacles being thrown in the way of one order more than of another. Hon. Gentlemen now began to see, that corn and cattle, imported into this country in exchange for its manufactures or its gold, were just as much the produce of British industry as the corn was of the soil. If the English farmer were allowed freely and without restraint to bring corn and cattle, the fruit of his labour, into the British market, the Legislature had no right to throw obstacles in the way of other classes of Englishmen, who also brought corn and cattle into the same market, being the produce of another species of industry. This was a position that was now admitted; and it was a very important one, because those who supported the Corn-laws were now driven to justify the continuance of them simply upon certain reasons of state—certain reasons of public utility, and also upon the ground that there were burdens upon the landed interest which did not fall on any other interest of the community. But before the House proceeded to discuss their reasons, it behoved them to bear in mind the position in which the supporters of the Corn-laws stood in that House and before the country. It was impossible to forget—he said it in no obnoxious sense—that they (the supporters of the Corn-laws) had a personal interest in this question. Therefore, following the rules of our law—following the rule adopted and acted upon by all persons who sought to investigate the truth, the House must subject the reasons of those Gentlemen to a more rigid and searching scrutiny than if they were wholly disinterested parties. There was one thing which gave to their case a very unpleasant complexion. The country believed that these laws were passed by the landed interest for their own special advantage; and when the hon. Gentlemen who supported them attempted to justify them, they differed materially in the character and nature of the defences they set up. One Gentleman took one line of defence, another adopted a different line of defence; there was no agreement amongst them as to the real and true ground of defence. Now it was perfectly well known that in a court of law, when persons were charged with any offence, if they differed from each other in defending the accusation, it gave to their case an unpleasant complexion, and made those who sat in judgment more inclined to suspect the accuracy of the reasons advanced by any one of them. The Gentlemen who supported the Corn-laws had fallen into that predicament. Their statements—their arguments differed from each other. The noble Lord who moved the Address, stated that these laws were maintained to enable the landed interest to bear the general and local burdens of the country. The right hon. Baronet (Sir Robert Peel) said, they were passed only to enable the land to bear the special burdens imposed upon it. The right hon. Baronet, the Paymaster of the Forces (Sir E. Knatchbull) said, that they were passed to keep the landed proprietor in his present station in society. These different statements were at variance with each other, and were, therefore, calculated to make the people suspect the sincerity of the party who undertook the defence of the laws which the hon. Member for Wolverhampton proposed to repeal. Why should the landed interest be so excessively sensitive at being charged with having passed laws for their own advantage? He believed, that any other men placed in the same position would have done the same thing. Had the Legislature of the day been swayed by men interested in any particular trade, laws, no doubt, would have been passed for the protection of that particular trade. Adam Smith, who was so often quoted in that House, actually stated, that in his days, people of the same trade could not meet together, even for conversation, amusement, or diversion, without discussing the possibility of raising the prices of their commodities, and conspiring against the public. This was the disposition and tendency of man; and it behoved the Gentlemen opposite to consider that this was the fearful position which they occupied, in the estimation of the public,—namely, that they were making laws for their own advantage. "You yourselves," continued the hon. Member, addressing himself to the Ministerial side of the House, "you yourselves," if you saw a combination of workmen forcibly preventing other workmen from offering their labour in the common market, would hesitate before you said, that that combination was for the public good, and not for the personal advantage of the men who had entered into it. Your own position differs little from this; for although the people admit that you are legislators, they do not forget that you are men—they do not forget that you have not lost the character of mankind by coming into this House, and that you are not less likely to use the power you possess to promote your own advantage than the combination of workmen to whom I have just adverted. Let them consider the nature of the defence which the right hon. Baronet, the Member for Tamworth, offered to the House in defence of the Corn-laws; and first, in regard to the special burdens said to be borne by the landed interest. He did not admit, but he would suppose, that these burdens were a justification for giving compensation to the landholders. Supposing that they were, would not every landed proprietor, who paid a greater amount of poor-rate, or a larger share of tithe than his neighbour, be, according to that doctrine, entitled to compensation; and should he not have a duty put upon his neighbour's corn in order to raise the price of his own. But did not tithe exist before the Corn-laws? When England became an importing, instead of an exporting country, they took advantage of that circumstance, and placed a duty on foreign grain, and not till then were the landed interest unable to bear the burdens put upon them. He would appeal to any hon. Gentleman, if it was meant to be contended, that if the Corn-law was repealed, the landed interest would not be obliged to pay tithe? That was the position they took. They said, that the Corn-law was a compensation for the burdens on land, and that tithe was one of these burdens; and he, therefore, inferred, that if they repealed the Corn-law, they would cease to pay tithe. Such an argument was calculated to create considerable alarm in those who considered the right of the church to tithe, to be as valid as the right of the proprietor to his estate. He would not go into the consideration of the other special burdens, for that part of the question had been ably discussed by the hon. Member for Renfrewshire. In regard to the independence of this country of foreign supply, he felt surprised that no hon. Gentleman opposite —many of whom were good historians—had pointed out a case in which a country depending on another for a supply, had failed to obtain it, when it had the means to purchase. He said when it had the means to purchase, because on this depended their getting supplies; for if they depended on the landed interest for supplies, without having the means to purchase those supplies, they certainly would not obtain them. He felt astonished that no hon. Gentleman had pointed out such a case; but he forgot, one case had been pointed out by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Dorchester, when addressing his constituents. The right hon. Baronet had quoted the highest authority, scriptural authority, so much condemned by the hon. Member for Bath, for a country being independent of foreign corn. The right hon. Baronet stated to his constituents, and he could correct him if he was misinformed—he stated to his constituents that there were two countries mentioned in Holy Writ, Tyre and Judea. That Tyre, rich and powerful, was obliged to send ambassadors to Judea to sue for peace, because Tyre was nourished by Judea. The right hon. Baronet in using this illustration, stated to his constituents that he believed that this particular passage had been written for their especial use and instruction, to show that a country ought to grow its own corn, and be independent of foreign supplies. He would ask the right hon. Baronet whether the instance cited by him was not in favour of one country depending on another, inasmuch as in the case of Judea and Tyre peace was the consequence, and not war? And he thought the case adduced was strongly in favour of their maintaining an intercourse with foreign nations, and that it served to show that mutual dependence prevented a war, which otherwise would have happened. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth, in discussing the question, declined to admit that the Corn laws had to any extent caused the present distress of the country, and in attempting to point out the causes of the distress, he stated first of all that the distress might be attributed to over speculation—to the connection of the master manufacturers with the joint-stock banks, and to their facilities of obtaining credit, by which they had been induced to make a greater quantity of goods than they reasonably could expect to dispose of. He wished to call the attention of the right hon. Baronet to a circumstance connected with the cotton manufacture, for to the cotton manufacture the right hon. Baronet had particularly alluded. He was in a position to deny that there had been any over production in that trade, or that the manufacturers had made a quantity larger than what they had good hope of being able to dispose of. He wished to ask the right hon. Baronet whether he was prepared to deny that the quantity of raw cotton worked up in the year 1841, was less than the quantity worked up in 1840?—That the quantity worked up in the three years ending 1841, was less than the quantity worked up in the three years ending 1838. If, then, the quantity in the latter period was less, the manufacturers must have made a smaller quantity of goods than in the former period. True, the right hon. Baronet said that the export trade had increased, but had not the home demand fallen off? Was it not cruel, then, in the right hon. Baronet to tell the manufacturers that they had made too great a quantity of goods—that they had not proportioned the supply to the demand, when he at the same time supported a law which limited that demand, and deprived the manufacturers of a fair chance of trade? No doubt bad harvests affected the home market to a certain extent, but the Corn-laws aggravated the evil, and it was beyond the power of man to foresee the falling off in the home trade. The right hon. Baronet had also attributed the distress to another cause—to their hostilities with China; but the hon. Member for Paisley (Mr. Hastie), a Gentleman who well knew the true state of the case, had made a statement on this point to the House exactly the reverse of that which the right hon. Baronet had made. That hon. Member had told them that instead of their trade with China having fallen off since the commencement of hostilities, that it had considerably increased, and was continually increasing. He called on the right hon. Baronet, and on the hon. Member for Paisley, to explain this important difference. Now in regard to the employment of the people, he would beg every hon. Member to look at the last census. When he saw that the increase had been greater in the manufacturing than in the agricultural districts—when he saw from the returns of the Registrar-general that the proportion of births to deaths was greater in the agricultural than in the manufacturing districts, how, he would ask, could they shut their eyes to the fact of the large increase in the manufacturing over the agricultural district, or to the cause of that increase. No doubt it had been caused by migration, and if it had, they saw that the landed interest, even with the protection of the Corn-laws, could not find employment for the agricultural population. The hon. Member for Wiltshire had talked of wages falling with the price of corn, but he would ask that hon. Member whether, with a Corn-law or without a Corn-law, there would not still be a competition between the English and foreign artisan? Whether, if the foreign manufacturer improved his machinery, so as to beat the English manufacturer, he would not be driven, as a matter of course, also to improve his machinery—to reduce the cost of production, or to lower the wages of his workmen, irrespective entirely of the price of food? If the English artisan was then to be brought into competition with the foreign artisan—if his wages were to be reduced by such competition, he asked the House whether the English artisan would not be better off if he could command a larger amount of food for those reduced wages, than if he could only command a smaller amount? The right hon. Baronet opposite had entered into a comparison between the condition of the people of Prussia and the people of England; but he surely did not mean to contend that if corn were rendered less abundant in Prussia the Prussian labourer would get more, or that if corn were made more abundant in England the English labourer would get less. It appeared to him that if the wages of the workmen in this country were reduced by foreign competition, the price of food must make a material difference in the comfort of the English labourers. If they reduced the quantity of food in this country by any given amount, in proportion would they raise the price of it, and the labourer would get less; whereas, if they increased the amount they would lower the price, and the labourer would obtain more. But how was it possible for the English manufacturer to compete with the foreign manufacturer, if they forced him to use agricultural produce at a cost greater than that which the foreign manufacturer paid for it? Hon. Gentlemen were not perhaps aware of the great quantity of agricultural produce used in the process of manufactures. In the cotton trade a very large quantity was consumed, and if the home manufacturer had to pay a higher rate for it than the foreign manufacturer, to that extent would he be unable to compete with him. That was one of the effects of the Corn-laws. They also disabled the English manufacturer from competing with the foreigner, not because they made wages higher, but because they limited the power of exchange, and deprived the manufacturers of the power of taking the staple article of foreign countries. How could the manufacturer extend his trade if they limited his power of exchange—if they would not allow him to take what other countries offered in return? Hon. Gentlemen opposite read over the state of the exports as if they were really jealous of the extension of the foreign trade of this country; they seemed to have a notion that there was some sort of rivalry between the manufacturing, commercial, and agricultural interests; they seemed to fear the advancement of the manufacturing and commercial classes, lest ultimately they might vie with the agricultural interest in the power it possessed in the State. They read the statement of their exports in a jealous spirit—they found a great increase, and they turned round to the manufacturers and asked them if they were not satisfied. The question was not as to the amount, or as to the increase of their exports at any particular time, but it was whether the exports were as great as they could be, if not prohibited and restrained by act of Parliament. Was it reasonable or right that trade should be extended only so far as the landed proprietors should permit? Was it reasonable that the merchants and manufacturers of this country should be considered a secondary class, subject to the pleasure, or indebted to the indulgence, of the landed interest? He asked them a still more important question. Was it right in them to allow trade to extend just far enough to minister to their own luxuries, but not far enough to better the condition of the humble? They allowed their luxuries to come in—their foreign wines, their silks, and every thing which could add to their splendour or increase their gratification; yet they would not allow of the introduction of bread—of that which would better the condition of the working man. The hon. Member for Sheffield had alluded to the competition for farms as another evil of the Corn-laws. The farmers complained that in consequence of the damming up of trade, of stopping the channels of commerce, many people were now driven to agriculture for subsistence, and that the competition for farms being so great, the farmer had either to reduce his mode of living to the condition of the labourer, or give up farming altogether. Did it not stand to reason, then, that the farmer was interested in the success of trade, and suffered from its depression? Had not farmers sons and daughters? What would become of them if there were not openings for them connected with the commercial or manufacturing interests in the country? He had read an article in the *Mark-lane Express*, which he believed was the organ of the Corn-law supporters, in which it was stated that the editor was surprised at the apathy of the farmers on the Corn-law question. He was not surprised at the apathy of the farmers—they knew perfectly well that it was a question of rent; and if prices were reduced, they would be enabled to make their arrangements accordingly. Competition would never allow them, under any circumstances, to get more than ordinary profits for their capital. They knew that well, and that the maintenance of the Corn-laws—this forcing system—had a tendency to make their occupation more hazardous than it otherwise would be. They knew that, as agriculturists, they had to bear the natural hazard of their calling; secondly, the chance of the repeal of the Corn-laws, on which their contracts were based; and, thirdly, the chance that if the Corn-laws were maintained, they would not fulfil the expectations held out respecting them. The Corn-laws had been faithless to farmers, they had been a rotten foundation to build upon; and when the farmer was called upon to make his contracts on the faith of those Corn-laws, he could not help looking back at the distress which he had suffered under them. With regard to the agitation against the Corn-laws making the application of capital to land a matter of peril and uncertainty, he admitted that it was an evil; but whose fault was it? It was the fault of those who maintained those laws. So long as they had Corn-laws, so long would they have agitation, and so long would they have the chance hanging over the farmer's head that these Corn-laws would be repealed. He did not lay any blame on the Anti-Corn-law League, because he believed they performed a sacred duty in endeavouring to expose the unjust laws. As he knew something of the agricultural districts, he would advise the farmers to be very cautious how they entered into fresh leases with their landlords. He knew the amount of this Corn-law agitation, and the bitter feeling which prevailed in men's minds against these laws not openly expressed, and he called upon the farmers to pause before they allowed themselves again to be deceived by the idea that this proposition of the right hon. Baronet was to be any thing like a permanent settlement. He was not one of those, when he was addressing the landlords, to hold out hopes to them that the Corn-laws could be repealed without causing some suffering to them. They could not at once secure cheap bread to the operative and high rents to the landlord at the same time. He believed that ultimately the landlords would share in the general prosperity to be produced by a repeal of the Corn-laws; but at present there must be some sacrifice; and it would become the aristocracy to be high-minded and magnanimous, and on this occasion to come forward in the spirit of self-sacrifice, and say, "We will not risk the permanent safety of this country to maintain our high rents." He believed that that advantage of an addition to their rents would be found to be a short-lived advantage; and he called upon the landlords not to be so short-sighted as to peril the permanent welfare of this country for the sake of grasping a temporary benefit to themselves. They might depend upon this as a general truth—that prosperity could not long be based upon injustice and wrong.

Mr. *B. Escott* said, it is impossible that any hon. Member of this House can be more deeply impressed than I am with a full sense of the great difficulty and vast importance of this question: (notwithstanding the statement of the hon. Member who spoke last night, that it was a subject which every child could comprehend:) its difficulty, from the perplexed and complicated nature of the details which must be mastered before it can be understood; its importance, affecting as it does the supply of the subsistence of the whole people, the protection of our cultivation, and therein the fortunes of those whose fortunes are invested in land and in its cultivation, the daily bread of those who work on the land, the prosperity of all those merchants, dealers, and shopkeepers who much depend on the landed people for their custom, and, in short, the very being and existence of this whole people. But, Sir, difficult as I allow this question to be in theory, there appears to me to be no difficulty as yet created by the arguments of hon. Members, or from our experience of the operation of the principle of the law itself, which should induce me to support a change as unsupported by facts and reason as it is totally unjustifiable in its origin and commencement. Sir, this is a continuation of the game of last year, but it is played between different parties, and for the benefit of different performers. I do not wish to refer unnecessarily to what is past; but the manner in which a great public measure is proposed is in effect part of the measure itself. If ever there was a scheme of danger—if all the cunningest men of this or any other country had met together to devise a plan of mischief—a plan, indeed, in which there might be a considerable portion of damage to their political opponents, but a much larger portion of damage to the best interests of their country, they could have hit on no fitter expedient for their bad purpose, than by proclaiming a promise of cheap bread to a partially distressed people, to attack in the tenderest place, the most vital and the most vulnerable, the wealth, and prosperity, and very being of the real nourishers of the people—the growers of British corn. But the question has been raised, and the question must be met. It must be met by argument, and not assertion. And before my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Villiers) called upon us, the representatives of the people, to repeal and totally abjure the principle of the law for regulating the importation of corn, it was necessary, in my apprehension, for him to prove two propositions to the satisfaction of this House. It was necessary for him to prove, first, that the distress of certain portions of the people is caused by the principle of the law for regulating the importation of foreign corn. Secondly, that the repeal of all laws founded on that principle would not cause greater evils to other portions of the community than those which he assumes it would remove. Sir, the hon. Member and his supporters not only do not prove these propositions, they never attempt to argue them. And yet, until these propositions are not only argued but proved, that man must be, as was well said in another place, a madman, or something worse, who would attack the priniple of a law which has not only answered its purpose better than any other principle which has ever been tried, but under which the owners and occupiers of lands have been taught by this House and the Legislature to believe themselves safe and secure. Six Parliaments have maintained this principle. Talk of public faith indeed! here is the faith of Parliament pledged to the landed property of England—pledged not indeed to particular enactments and clerical details of scales and figures — who could imagine such a folly?—but pledged to the principle of protection—protection without prohibition; but still protection to the home grower. And under this solemn sanction and security, and relying on this faith of Parliament, have they purchased, taken leases, made devises and settlements, laid out vast sums in improvements and expensive systems; married, made plans in life, educated and provided for children in business, and whom they fondly thought were safe under the shelter of that protection beneath which their fathers rested. Is the hon. Gentleman prepared for a system of treachery and confiscation? I know he is not; but I know also that his motion, if carried, would be equivalent to such a system. But there are the tithes too as well as the land. Why, the whole tithe property of the Church of England, and the lay tithe as well as the church tithe, has just been commuted; that is, exchanged and settled to its owners by Parliament on this very public and national faith of Parliament. Will you not only sweep away landowners and farmers—will you violate the property of the church which you have just guaranteed? I say not a word of the policy of that arrangement. I was no party to it. I am happy I was not. But I know you have not yet quite dissevered the interests of the landowners and the church. They still derive their all from the same source—the soil of their country. Are you prepared, before the ink of the last commutation deed is dry, to say that the price of Polish and Russian wheat, barley, and oats, shall be the measure of the tithe-owner's annual receipts, as well as the measure of the landowners', and farmers', and labourers' gains? But you must say it. There cannot be two measures. There cannot be one price for one, and another price for the other. Tithes have been commuted at wheat at 56*s.* the quarter. But the landowners and farmers of England can never pay the tithe-owner according to one value, while they receive another for their own crop; it is too absurd. It is not the weak defence of an act of Parliament which prevents it. It is the more enduring sense of necessity and of justice. Sir, the property of the church and of the landowners rests on one foundation; and it is fit that they should stand and fall together. This has been called a religious question. If it is such, it is because the defence or spoliation of church property may indeed be a very serious religious question. But how is it that those who are loudest in their denunciations of landed protection are generally the enemies of the church? They are the men who have endeavoured to make it a religious question. Of course, religion is the highest and best motive for all good actions, political as well as private. But there is an old saying, that the corruption of the best thing becomes the worst. And thus it is when religion, which should be the handmaid of peace, and mercy, and justice, and truth, becomes the angry and corrupt minister of the hatred and passions of mankind. But this abuse is disclaimed by the wisest of those who support the hon. Member's motion, I trust never to be revived. But, Sir, I will come to what appears to be the strongest argument of the party who support this motion. They say they are not about to ruin the landed interest. They say, we will feed the people from the fields of Russia and Poland, it is true, and give them cheap bread, but we will injure no man. But then, to be sure, the hon. Gentleman is good enough to tell us that he will reduce wheat to 5*s.* a bushel. I wish he would explain how that would injure no one. Why, the hon. Member for Manchester, who last addressed the House, has expressly told us that his measure is a heavy blow to agriculture, and a discouragement to the farmers: he is right, and yet he too will injure no man. But you will give us cheap bread, will you? Do they who make that promise suppose that the people do not recollect that they are the same persons who made that promise six months ago?—that they are the same Gentlemen, though they have changed their places, who proposed a scheme for giving us cheap bread, (but not till they had lost the power to carry any scheme into execution,) and who proposed to effect their promise of cheap bread by raising the duty on corn? who would have imposed a fixed duty of 8*s*. a quarter on corn, when corn was really wanted, and when the law which they told us was starving the people, was, within three weeks from the time of their announcement of the proposition, letting it in in abundance at a duty of 1*s*. Have they settled that little account with the people? No; but the people have more than a six months' memory. They know that they were appealed to on this very question, and that in the very same breath with which they were told that the Corn-laws were an odious tax on the staff of life, they were offered a scheme for raising a revenue by an increase of the tax on its importation. Sir, the people knew how to treat such conduct, and they showed their hatred of the treachery, while they spurned the insult on their understandings. But that indeed is not the scheme to-day. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bath exults in the reflection that he has at least got rid of a fixed tax on corn; but even that hon. and learned Gentleman, soaring so high as he does above the flight of his compeers on the other side of the House—even he has not fairly argued this question of agricultural protection. We are congratulated that the fixed duty is abandoned, and that it is a free trade which we are called upon to discuss. Is it a free-trade that is the question. It is no such thing. It is a setting of the producers of English corn, while they pay English taxes and English wages, to compete, in the sale of their article corn, with the producers of continental corn, who pay neither the one nor the other. The whole question lies in this fallacy—the fallacy of giving this good name to a bad thing. And this monstrous injustice is called free-trade, by men who grumble not and never complain that the producers of every other English commodity are protected by a heavy *ad valorem* duty. If we are really to have free trade then, I admit and rejoice to know it, that there are none, no class of producers, who can bear it so well as those who live upon the land. There are none who can so well afford to trust to their own resources. But then don't mock us by the excellent phrase "free-trade," while you mean a totally different thing. Set us not to run a race with a heavy load at our backs against unencumbered competitors; and then when we complain of the unequal start, call us monopolists for our pains, and tell the spectators—the people—that you have offered us a free course in which we were unwilling to contend. The hon. and learned Gentleman asks for a statement of our burdens. He shall have it. That load at our backs contains the whole of the land-tax, the whole of the tithes, the whole of the highway-rates, the whole of the church-rates, nine tenths of the county-rates, nine tenths of the poor-rates, the greater part of the malt tax, four fifths of the assessed taxes, and the whole of the excess of English wages over those of other parts of Europe. But the hon. and learned Gentleman knows this, as he knows every thing else, much better than I do. And how does he meet the difficulty? Why, he says, "Prove your burdens, and we are ready to take them off." He seems conscious that we can prove a claim to protection to the amount of our burdens, and he tells us that while he abolishes our protection he will abolish that which gives us the claim. He says to hon. Members on this side the House, that he will move for the repeal of the burdens which oppress us; and he calls upon us to support him with our votes when he moves for their repeal. I cannot accept the terms of the hon. and learned Gentleman. We are not desirous to break up the financial system of the country, and destroy the national faith. That is not the object of the agriculturists of Great Britain; and the hon. and learned Gentleman's remedy may be worse than the disease, for which he is kind enough to prescribe. But the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, who makes this motion, has another mode of solving the difficulty. He says, "True, you have burdens and payments exclusive and distinct from those of other classes; but that gives you no claim to protection: for you have a ready mode of compensating yourselves. The burdens which you bear are part of the cost of your production: and the cost of your production is part of the price which you charge for your produce: you are therefore repaid in your high price of corn for your outlay, burdens, taxes, and all; and you have no need to ask us for protection, because in truth you protect yourselves." And then what would the hon. Member do? Why, he would deprive us of the power of charging the higher price, which he truly says is our protection, by reducing the price of wheat to *5s.* a bushel, by the competition with untaxed produce from other countries. That is his own statement. He admits in his whole argument the necessity of corn being dearer than it otherwise would be, to remunerate the agriculturist for his expenses; and in the same breath he tells us he would reduce the price to that of European cheapness, and do the agriculturist no harm. Sir, this whole cry of cheap corn is a fallacy. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Macaulay) instructed the House with the novel information that cheap bread must be a good thing. Had he said plentiful bread, he would have been nearer the mark. Cheap and dear are but relative terms. The cheapness of a thing depends on the supply and demand. True: but it depends just as much, in the common acceptation of the terms, on the quantity of circulating money in the country by which the article is bought, or, in other words, by which its price is measured. It is not every mode of making a thing cheap that is an advantage to the buyer. It is no advantage, I take it, when the cheapening process deprives him of the money wherewith to buy. And this is the answer to the monstrous doctrine of which we are fated to hear so much, of a dear and a cheap country. Let me apply it for one moment to this very question of corn. It has been frequently stated, that while bread has been 10*d.* a loaf in England, it has been 6*d.* in France. That, perhaps, is not correct: but it has certainly been 20 per cent. lower in France than here with us. But then while in England the wages of a carpenter or mason are from 2*s.* 6*d.* to 4*s.*, and of an agricultural labourer 1*s.* 6*d.* a day, in the French provinces the same persons earn severally only 1*s.* 7*d.* and 10*d.* a day. So that if bread is 20 per cent. cheaper in France, and wages 70 per cent. lower than in England, the difference between 70 and 20 being 50, bread is actually 50 per cent. more in the command of the English workman than of the French. Now this is so plain and obvious, that it is impossible to suppose that it is overlooked by those Gentlemen who oppose the principle of protecting English agriculture. I wish that those who sigh for the blessings of cheapness, would look a little deeper into this matter. As far as money prices are concerned, a rich country must be a dear country; a poor country must be comparatively cheap. And those who are now crying out for the cheap bread of other countries, and complaining of the price of English commodities, are, in fact, stretching out their hands for the poverty of foreign lands, and lamenting the riches of their own. What is it but this superior wealth of our country, attended by its necessary concomitant—a high price in money—which gives us, by the superabundance of our money, the command of all the various productions of the earth? In nothing is it so apparent as in this case of buying corn abroad. What is it that enables us to buy the corn of foreign countries when we want it? Only our greater riches—our plenty of money—in other words, our higher prices. And it is this higher price which we are accustomed to pay, and which protection enables us to pay and to receive, that in a time of famine and real necessity for foreign aid, would give us the key of the granaries, and open to us the market of the world. And what would these cheapening philosophers do? They would lower the scale of the wealth of their country, and abandon its commercial superiority. They would lessen the value of its land; but they would annihilate its trade and commerce. Its soil they cannot annihilate, nor destroy its perennial bounty. In spite of their foolish projects, it will still continue to feed their wrongs, and nourish their ingratitude; while its possessors and its cultivators are still the best customers for their trade and manufactures, and maintain the wealth and credit of the country against the subtle lucubrations of economists, or the rashness of disappointed politicians. But while I trust and believe that this will be so, I am not the less bound to guard, by all the means in my power, against the possible success of these ruinous schemes. I am not the less anxious to guard against desolating the corn fields of England, because the desolation of those corn fields would be attended by the ruin of our trade and commerce, our shopkeepers and artificers, and by a great confiscation of the property of the church. I am much the more anxious to do it for these reasons. We maintain, at least I will never belong to a party that does not maintain, that the well-being of all classes of its people should be the one great care of its Government. That in these things there is no priority of interests;—that there is no favouritism. But that this great principle cannot be acted upon for the benefit of a nation like this, nor efficiently maintained, unless we also remember that it is to the soil of every country that its first national obligations are due as the great birth-place and nourisher of its people. There are none more ready than the agriculturists and the inhabitants of the country towns and villages, to acknowledge, to the fullest extent, the obligations which they lie under, and the advantages which they derive from all the manufacturers and traders of every description, as customers for their produce, and active and ample contributors to their comforts, their happiness, and their wealth. But then we ask them to consider, what the wisest of them have ever been ready to acknowledge, that they owe to us what we can never owe to them;—that they owe not only their growth and increase, but their very existence to the prosperity of the land on which they have grown up. They have started into being from its labours. They are the growth of its exuberance. May we not ask them also to remember how their growth has been encouraged, as well as whence their origin was derived? And if the manufacturers of England have attained a high position, and a clear superiority above those of Europe and the world, they have done so under that very system of commercial law and British policy which has protected the land of England, while it has promoted their increase. And would a little party of them now ask leave to overset the corner-stone of that commercial policy by which they have grown so great? Whence is this strange insanity? Has too much prosperity made them mad? Sir, I know not what it is, nor to what catastrophe success may lead them; but I know that in other times, and in other countries, the predominance of manufactures has been the prelude to decay, and the neglect of domestic agriculture the forerunner of the misery of the people. And when I find that the soil of this country is, and ever has been, the main source, not the only source, from which its population has been fed, I feel it my duty to take care lest in seeking for foreign supplies the cultivation of our soil be discouraged or neglected, and the people one day be fed with the vain and bitter hope of obtaining from the fields of an enemy, or a rival, that which they might have grown, but have neglected to grow, at home. It is scarcity, it is famine, which are really to be dreaded from playing tricks with agriculture. May I be pardoned for referring for one moment to antiquity in this great matter. When the historian of the Roman empire was recording the distress which a scarcity of corn had produced in Rome, he expressly attributed it to a neglect of Italian cultivation, and the encouragement given to the produce of other countries by a dependence on foreign supplies, he says:—

> "Frugum egestas et orta ex eo fames: quindecim dierum alimenta urbi, non amplius, superfuisse constitit. Deum benignitate, et modestia hiemis, rebus extremis subventum. At hercle olim ex Italiæ regionibus longinquas in provincias commeatus portabant. Nec nunc infecunditate laboratur; sed Africam potius, et Egyptum exercemus; navibus casibusque vita populi Romani permissa est.'

He does not complain of ruined farms and cultivators, of landowners reduced to poverty, and the starving labourers of the fields. No, he does not speak of class-interests, as the noble Lord, the Member for London, calls them. This great man knew better than to consider agriculture a class interest. He speaks of the life of all—of the whole Roman people reduced to fifteen days' provisions, not because they did not import corn, but because they would import it—because they trusted for their supply of bread to fragile ships and foreign fields, and preferred a precarious merchandise to the improvement of the fertility of their own. It is the same here to-day. But without saying now, how far that parallel may be carried, I am sure there is no country under heaven in which rash experiments on the cultivators of the soil are less to be encouraged than here with us. There is none in which they are so likely to fail miserably; and there is none in which their failure is so sure to be attended with so tremendous and wide-spread a ruin. There is none in which the utter destitution and misery of the people would be so sure to follow the destruction of what the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) calls class interests; but which we call the lawful depositories of arts, of wealth, of knowledge, and of power. What, then, shall we do? I can feel to the full the danger of the changeful system in which we move. I can feel the full force of the argument which would call upon Parliament to stand by what, in some measure, has been proved by experience to be right, rather than to set out upon the interminable search for what may possibly be better. And, surely, I can honour those, who taking up their position on the old ways, refuse to be diverted from their path by a dread of the precipice to which it may lead them. That is a lofty and an enviable position. Mine shall be a humbler choice; to oppose mischief by the means afforded me to oppose it; but if a humbler, not the less honourable. I will not assist to carry the ruinous measures of the noble Lord, because I may not quite approve of the measures of her Majesty's Ministers; I have not forgotten 1830, nor the mistakes in vain now lamented, nor the events consequent on that unhappy era, nor the impulse then given by well meaning men to the downward movement. The opinions, too, of her Majesty's Ministers are entitled to great respect. They have every motive to mean well, and their ability and knowledge are unquestioned. There are amongst them the first statesmen in Europe. True, they have yielded something; they have retreated in bringing on this question at all at the present moment, and after late events, from what many believed to be a firm position; that is no proof that they are wrong. There have been retreats which have been only second in glory to great victories. They have lain in the road to victories. This is an age, too, in which everything tends towards concession, and there is little of reward for a stern inflexible career. I cannot but think, that this retreat has been dictated by wisdom and by conscience, and therefore, that it is a retreat in which there is no dishonour. And last of all, what, if by opposing their measure, I give effect to the principles of the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Roebuck), and the consistent opponents of landed protection. I make the best bargain for agriculture by supporting her Majesty's Ministers; I make the best bargain for the constitution of the country. This is not only a question of Corn-laws; it affects the very principles of this constitution, and the honour no less than the constitution of this House. I think I see very plainly what is coming. The noble Lord (Lord John Russell) once said this country could not afford a revolution once a-year. No doubt what he said was true —no doubt he said it in sincerity—and yet he must take his share in a new revolution if he will oppose himself in sincerity to the landed interest. Under this constitution, that interest, supported as it is by the best portion of all the others, while it maintains its interests with moderation and respect to them, must in effect be the governing power in this country. The noble Lord said it should be so, and I rejoice to know that it is. But the noble Lord's associates, who know it too, full as well as he, and are as desirous of the exaltation of their party, will make that fact, ere long, their strong reason for new changes, and a fresh reform; and having first argued that alleged grievances cannot be redressed, without abolishing landed protection, they will tell him, and according to their views they will tell him truly, that under this constitution of Parliament relief is hopeless. They will tell him, that he has given them a reform indeed, but that the fruit of that reform, when ripe and gathered, has been a landlord's and a farmers' Parliament, and that all that he has been about is useless, while the real work of popular reformation still remains to be performed. Will he follow the bolder spirits and far better logicians of this downward movement, or will he hold back and tremble when pressed with the doctrines drawn from that old school of Parliamentary sedition, in which he was himself, too long a time, so accomplished a teacher? Will he cry peace, when there shall be no peace? Will he, in this great political conflict, vainly strive at the last to place a barrier between the living and the dead, and with a feeble hand, but stirred by a pulse of better aspirations, and the memory of those who have gone before him, hope to save in the last struggle, the land and liberties of his great ancestors from the tyranny of modern inventions, and the coarser horrors of democratic rage? Sir, I know not what the noble Lord will do next. But having no proof of national benefits to be derived from his changes, or those of his more rational associates, and seeing all around me much of the distress and mischief, the effect of ill-considered change, I am resolved, for the benefit of the country, and the preservation of its liberties, to stand by the landed interest, which is only another name for the English interest, and to oppose, by the best means in my power, and now, by voting for the measure of her Majesty's Ministers, the schemes of those who for years past have shewn by nothing so much as their rashness in new legislation their hostility to English liberty, and their incapacity to govern their country.

Debate again adjourned.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, February 23, 1842.

MINUTES.] New Member. Major General Morison, for Clackmannan.

Bills. 1°. Colonial Passengers; Van Dieman's Land.

Private Bills. 1°. Bristol Boundary; Blackburn and Chorley Road; South Eastern Railway; St. Austel Market; St. Marylebone Parish; Surrey New Roads; Liverpool Paving; Granton Pier.—2°. Greenwich Railway; Birkenhead Improvement.

Petitions presented. From several parties, in favour of Severn Navigation Bill.—By Mr. Brotherton, from Accrington, Captain Berkeley, from Bristol, Mr. Marsland, from Stockport, Mr. B. Wood, from Southwark, Mr. Fox Maule, from Perth, and several other hon. Members, from a number of places, for the Abolition of the Corn-laws.—By Viscount Sandon, from Millers of Liverpool, for Encouraging the Importation of Wheat more than Flour; and from Liverpool, against the Buildings Regulation Bill.—By Mr. T. Duncombe, from an Individual of Brighton, for an Alteration in the Rate-paying Clauses of the Reform Act.—By Mr. Fox Maule, from Birmingham, and Viscount Sandon, from Liverpool, against the Boroughs Improvement Bill.—By Mr. B. Wood, from Southwark, and other places, and Captain Berkeley, from Marylebone, for Redeeming the Tolls on the Metropolitan Bridges.—By Mr. Macaulay, from Edinburgh, to Examine Captains and Mates of Ships before they are Appointed.—By an hon. Member, from Little Bedwyn, for Extension of the Church of England.—By an hon. Member from Antrim, for Legalizing Dissenters Marriages.

QUEENBOROUGH CORPORATION — PRINTING PETITIONS.] Mr. *G. W. Wood* rose, in pursuance of notice, to move

"That the petition of the three undersigned free burgesses of the borough of Queenborough be printed, for the use of Members only, together with the names of the persons who have signed the petition."

The petition in question was presented by the noble Lord the Member for London on the 11th inst., and was referred to the public petitions committee. That committee, having considered the petition, found that it contained inculpatory matter, which it would not be expedient to print for general circulation, and had therefore agreed to the following report:—*

In conformity with the opinion contained in that report, he now submitted his motion to the House.

Sir *E. Knatchbull* said, as to the charges contained in the petition, and which were brought before the committee, he had had no opportunity of forming any opinion. The practice of the House he understood to be, that when any hon. Member presented a petition which it was deemed necessary to have printed, such hon. Member should give notice of his intention to move that it be taken into consideration by the House. Now, as the noble Lord who brought forward this petition did not give notice of his intention to bring it specifically before the House, he did not think that it ought to be printed, as it contained such serious charges against individuals. If it were printed for the use of the 658 Members of that House it would be, in fact, equivalent to a general publication.

Lord *J. Russell* said, that when he introduced the petition he did not himself move that it should be printed, but that it should be referred to the committee on public petitions to decide as to the course which ought to be adopted with respect to it; and, in his opinion, the committee had taken a correct view of the question. He was not bound to make a motion on the subject; but still it was not his intention to leave the matter where it then stood. He meant, on a future day, to ask for leave to bring in a bill which would touch in this, and all other small corporations, matters (such as those that were connected with this petition) that were not provided for in the general measure affecting the large corporations.

Mr. *G. W. Wood* said, the committee, referring to the words of their instructions, thought it right that the petition should be printed for the use of Members only, but they would not, as it contained inculpatory matter, allow it to be printed for sale.

Mr. *Estcourt* was opposed to the printing of the petition, which he thought could only serve to calumniate individuals.

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* See Ante Feb. 22,

Mr. *Wallace* observed, that the present was an excellent exemplification of what he said a few evenings ago, namely, that petitions from the people were not attended to or understood, in that House; and they would find that when to-morrow's papers came out not a single word of this conversation between Gentlemen across the Table would be printed. It would be said that after a little conversation across the Table the petitions of the people were dismissed; and this would continue until the people were differently represented.

Mr. *W. Wynn* would not leave it in the power of any individual to give currency, through the medium of a petition, to any slander which he might think proper to send forth to the world. It was tremendous to think, that any person should have the power to give currency to slanders throughout the kingdom, before an opportunity was given for examining and thoroughly investigating the allegations which he might think proper to make to the prejudice of others. About a year ago a party against whom a verdict had been given in a court of law petitioned that House, imputing partiality to the judge, (though a more upright administrator of the law was not to be found in Westminster-hall), declaring that he had given an unjust charge, and that a verdict had, in consequence, been given contrary to evidence. Now, he would ask, how could they ascertain the truth or falsehood of such allegations? Thus it was that, if they did not watch this power with great jealousy, they might be made the engine of giving currency to accusations that, if properly examined, would perhaps be found totally without foundation.

Mr. *T. Duncombe* moved as an amendment to leave out the words "for the use of Members only."

Amendment negatived.—Original motion agreed to.

TURNPIKE TRUSTS]. Mr. *F. Maule* begged to know whether the Government had taken the subject of Turnpike trusts into their consideration, and, if so, whether they intended to deal with it during the present Session. The Government could not but be aware that the funds of those trusts were in a deplorable condition, and that many parties would be seriously injured who had advanced money on them. He would beg to suggest, in case the Government intended to interfere during the present Session, that it would be well to arrest the progress of those private bills, for which there were at present a number of petitions before the house, until the general measure was introduced.

Sir *J. Graham* could assure the hon. Member that the subject had not escaped the attention of the Government, and that it was intended to introduce a general measure, one of the objects of which would be to prolong the duration of the acts which would expire in three or four years. It would also be proposed to the House to suspend until after Easter any further progress of local acts.

Subject at an end.

POOR-LAW—GILBERT'S UNIONS.] Captain *Pechell* regretted he had not been in the House the other evening, when the hon. Member for Finsbury put a question to the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department, relative to the course which the Government intended to pursue upon the subject of the Poor-laws; but he had understood that upon that occasion the right hon. Baronet said that he purposely abstained from answering the question. He wished to ask whether the right hon. Baronet would now state to the House the intention of her Majesty's Government with regard to parishes incorporated under Gilbert's Act, and towns having local acts.

Sir *J. Graham* said, that he had heard nothing from the hon. and gallant Officer to induce him to depart from the intention which he announced on a former evening, of not entering in any shape into the details of the Government measure on the subject of the Poor-laws, until he was about to ask leave to introduce it.

IPSWICH ELECTION.] Mr. *R. Wason* rose to call the attention of the House to the petition of Mr. H. Ashurst relative to the Ipswich election, and to submit the necessity of adopting some means to secure the evidence of Sir Thomas Cochrane upon the subject of the Ipswich election petition. He thought the House ought to possess, and did possess, the power to compel the attendance of a material witness previous to the trial of a case, where he could not be present at the trial. The 1st of William 4th, c. 22, had given to the courts of law the power which he claimed for the House; and such a power was clearly essential to the exercise of the functions of a court of justice. But if it was necessary to a court of law, it was infinitely more necessary to the House of Commons. Because, if a suitor in a court of law represented that a material witness could not be present at the time fixed for a trial, the court could and usually did postpone the trial. But the House could not postpone a case in this way, and therefore it was the more necessary that it should have such a a power as he contended for. But although it might be admitted that the House ought to possess such a power, it might be contended that in point of fact they had it not. He (Mr. Wason) maintained that the House inherently possessed every power and privilege necessary to the due performance of its public functions. It might be asked, how did he propose to enforce the power in the present case? He thought the utmost courtesy should be used to the gallant Admiral in question, and he thought the petition showed that those who required Sir Thomas Cochrane's evidence were anxious to make any arrangements that would suit his convenience. Sir Thomas Cochrane, however, had ultimately declined to enter into negotiation on the subject. There were two or three courses which he thought the House might take in this case. One way was to require the attendance of the gallant officer at the House to-morrow; he might then be examined respecting those papers, and might produce them, and those, with his examination taken by a short-hand writer, might be brought before an election committee on oath. He did not wish to enter into the constitutional bearings of this question but he trusted the House would see, tha' unless this case was looked into, the most enormous power might be vested in the hands of a wicked minister. If the House of Commons could not interfere in a case like this, it might happen that all a minister would have to do, to carry elections, would be to send a dozen or a couple of dozen of officers to enter into negotiations as to the money that ought to be given to a certain number of voters for the purposes of bribery, and these having received full information of the position in which the towns were placed, another gentleman might come forward, who, without entering into any preliminaries, might quietly pay the money without saying any thing on the subject. This would be giving, in his estimation, to a bad minister, enormous powers for tampering with the elections to that House, especially could the same minister have the power of sending persons out of the way who might be required as witnesses. It could not be said in this case that it was a fishing inquiry, for the document wanted had already appeared in the public papers; it had been made the subject of animadversion in the House, and if the House would look to the first letter of Mr. Ashurst, it would be seen that the attention of the gallant Officer had been directly called to that which was wanted. This was the letter:—

> "In serving you with the Speaker's warrant to attend the Ipswich election committee, I beg, on behalf of the sitting Members, to assure you that it is not their wish to put you to the slightest personal inconvenience. Their object is to lay in a proper manner before the committee that correspondence, a portion of which has already been published both in the local and London papers; and should with pleasure confer with any professional gentleman you may refer to, to attain that object with the least personal inconvenience to yourself."

The summons served upon Sir Thomas Cochrane called upon him to produce the documents. The question then for the House to determine was this—could it, or could it not, compel the attendance of a witness served with the Speaker's warrant, who had declared his intention of going abroad? This came within the point for which he was contending. First, there was a case pending; second, the witness declared his intention of going abroad; third, the question which was to be the subject of examination must be material to the point at issue. [The *Attorney-general* "Hear, hear."] He observed that the hon. Attorney-general cheered him in laying down the position. If the Attorney-general wished, he could show that it was most material. He had no objection to show to the House why it was that this evidence must be most material. Here the parties had complied with every thing that a court of law required previous to the granting of a summons. The House would receive nothing upon affidavit—proceedings there could only be upon petition. Here, then, they had first a petition presented and to be tried. There was thus a case pending. Secondly, the petitioner stated that Sir Thomas Cochrane had the intention of going abroad. He said, that

"Your petitioner having been informed that the said Sir Thomas Cochrane had declared his intention of going abroad, and thus depriving the sitting Members of the benefit of his testimony, directed his clerk, Stewart Tournay (who had served the said Sir Thomas Cochrane with the said summons), to call upon the said Sir Thomas Cochrane to make an appointment for your petitioner, with the view of preventing any personal inconvenience to the said Sir Thomas Cochrane by his detention in this country. That the said Stewart Tournay accordingly, on Monday, the 21st of February instant, called at the said Sir Thomas Cochrane's residence, and was informed by the servant of the said Sir Thomas Cochrane that his master was going abroad in the space of about ten days. That the said Stewart Tournay afterwards saw the said Sir Thomas Cochrane, and requested him to make an appointment for your petitioner to call upon him for the purpose aforesaid, when the said Sir Thomas Cochrane declined to make any such appointment; and, in answer to a remark that the said Stewart Tournay made to him, as to whether your petitioner was to consider such refusal as his (Sir Thomas Cochrane's) final determination not to take any notice of the Speaker's warrant served upon him by the said Stewart Tournay, the said Sir Thomas Cochrane stated that he should not express any further opinion of his intentions, or words to that effect. Your petitioner therefore prays your honourable House to take the subject into your consideration, and to do that which you shall deem best adapted to promote the ends of justice."

The hon. Member referred to Archibald's Practice, p. 243, to show that such evidence would be sufficient in a court of law to make a Judge grant a rule *nisi* under the circumstances. And if a court of law deemed it unnecessary to show the materiality of the evidence, surely it could not be unnecessary in that place, which was the grand inquest of the nation, that they should resort to any quibbling to prevent the petitioner having the relief he applied for. He would, therefore, move that Sir T. Cochrane be called to the bar of the House, to answer the allegations in the petition. But if any other hon. Member would suggest any other proposition, which would be less inconvenient to Sir Thomas Cochrane, all the correspondence at the same time being produced, and no injury resulting to any party, he would agree to it. But if the Attorney-general should consider it necessary to show that the correspondence was absolutely material and essential, he was ready to prove it was so at that very moment. He would, therefore, conclude by moving that Sir Thomas Cochrane be called to the Bar of the House.

Mr. *T. Duncombe* having seconded the motion.

The *Attorney-General* thought it was hardly necessary he should state, that neither the hon. Gentlemen opposite, nor any other hon. Member in the House entertained a more profound respect for the powers and privileges of that House, or was more strongly of opinion that as much respect, or if possible more respect, should be paid to any mandate, authority, or warrant, from the Speaker of that House directing the attendance of a gentleman upon an election committee, as would be paid to the same species of process issued from any other court, than was he (the Attorney-general). But having made that concession, he must say, that he scarcely knew what object the hon. Member had in view in calling Sir T. Cochrane to the Bar of the House. Undoubtedly the courts in Westminster-hall, had the power under a particular Act of Parliament of obtaining the evidence of witnesses beforehand, which might afterwards be referred to for the purposes of the trial; and it might be desirable that that House should in some way or other possess that power, but beyond all doubt the House at present did not possess it, nor any means whatever of exercising any similar description of inquiry. It seemed to him, therefore, that the suggestion that Sir T. Cochrane should attend at the Bar of the House, and then, that his examination, not upon oath, should be taken, and should be laid before the committee with an attestation substantiating its correctness, was not a proposition which could be held to be in conformity with the law of evidence in this kingdom. He could not but suppose that this motion was brought forward by the hon. Member in ignorance of that fact. He admitted, that the subject was one of considerable importance, and that it might be quite right that some means should be hereafter adopted to further the ends of justice, by enabling the House to bring before it persons who might be required as witnesses on election petitions and who contemplated leaving the country. He also very readily admitted, that inconveniences and disadvantages might arise from the non-possession of that power; but the House would recollect that there might be disadvantages on the other side in every respect equally cogent. He would state a fact regarding the present case which would illustrate his meaning. Sir T. Cochrane was appointed to the important office he was now about to leave England for the purpose of holding before he was served with the Speaker's warrant. Now, let the House suppose it possible that it was because his high reputation and gallantry in the naval service of his country, had commended him to the authorities as a proper person to hold this appointment; that it was for this reason he was selected as a fit person to be served with the Speaker's *subpœna.* He was far from insinuating that that was the case, but he put it to the House that such circumstances might happen. But, in addition to the other facts, he would call upon the House to consider how Sir T. Cochrane was situated in this matter, That gallant Officer had not been a candidate for Ipswich at the late election, he had not been personally interested in the election, he had taken no part in it, he had had nothing material to do with it. It was true that Sir Thomas had been a candidate for the representation of the borough on a previous occasion, and he (the Attorney-general) supposed it was on account of some circumstances connected with that earlier contest [Mr .*R. Wason*—No, no], at any rate it was on account of circumstances which the hon. Member opposite had not clearly stated, and which were not disclosed in the petition, that it was now proposed to call him to their bar for the purpose of examination. He thought those circumstance had been very unnecessarily kept back, and that much needless delicacy had been shown in not stating them. But not being set forth, it was for the House to take the facts as they found them, and to look at the real position in which Sir T. Cochrane was placed. Now he would take for granted what had not been stated in the House, but what he was led to believe was the case—that Sir T. Cochrane had written some letters in the newspapers stating, that he had been asked to become a candidate for Ipswich, and had refused the invitation, and he would also take for granted that it was upon facts adverted to in those letters, that it was now desired that the gallant Officer should undergo examination. He thought it would be very difficult for any one to say, that such circumstance constituted a legal ground for calling Sir T. Cochrane to the Bar. The House, too, would bear in mind, that it possessed the means of doing justice to all the parties concerned in this case, without presupposing that Sir T. Cochrane would so far forget himself, so greatly neglect his public duty, or the respect he owed to that House, as to refuse to obey the *subpœna* of the Speaker. They ought to take it for granted, that the gallant Officer would obey the warrant, but if in the result they discovered that he had formed an erroneous judgment, either as to the importance of his testimony, or the duty due to the warrant of that House; if they found that despite, that warrant, he did go abroad without giving his evidence then the House should remenber that an application could be made to the special committee, who could postpone their decision and make an application to the House upon the subject. He desired it should be borne in mind also, that this motion was made on behalf of the sitting Members, and further, that it was perfectly competent for the committe, if they found it necessary, to postpone their decision until Sir T. Cochrane returned from abroad. As sitting Members the parties concerned were deprived of no right, and therefore the committee in so postponing the decision would be doing infinitely less injustice, than if they were keeping parties out of the seats to which they deemed they were entitled. But, supposing the House did agree to adopt steps in the matter, what, he would ask, were they to do? Could they issue a writ of *ne exeat regno,* to prevent the gallant Admiral from going abroad? Even supposing he was at the Bar, and questions were put to him, what use could be made of his evidence? He admitted, for his own part, that, giving the subject all due consideration—treating it with all the gravity and attention it deserved—he could not think that the House had the power to take any such step. He was sure they had no such power if they acted on the rules of the courts below. If any such motion as that before the House were made in any court in Westminster-hall, the simple answer to it would be, "This court cannot assume that the witness will wantonly neglect his duty, and therefore it is impossible to concur in any such application." They in that House must act on the same principle. They must not assume that any subject intended to fail in his respect to the law. Unless they chose to interfere, the matter would remain as it was for the present. No step would be taken in it either on one side or on the other, until the appointed period came for investigation. When that time arrived, they would see whether or not the witness subpœned appeared to give evidence, and if he did not, then he was open to punishment. He would submit, therefore, that the House must leave the question where it was. If the law in the matter was defective it could be amended, but it would, he thought, be highly inexpedient to adopt a course which was new, unprecedented, inconvenient, and not very respectful either to the gallant Officer or to their own authority. Taking this view of the question, he should meet the hon. Member's motion with a direct negative, in which he trusted the House would concur.

Mr. *O'Connell* remarked, that the hon. and learned Gentleman who had just sat down, had argued this case with that legal ingenuity and consummate skill which might have been expected in one so highly distinguished in his profession. But what the House ought to do, was to look at the simple facts presented to it. It was alleged, that Sir T. Cochrane was in the possession of evidence—that it was not his mere personal attendance alone that was required—that it was not verbal evidence merely that was expected to be obtained from him; but also written documents and letters. It was alleged that these documents were material to this case. It was also alleged in addition, that Sir T. Cochrane had been served with a summons to attend and give evidence, and that he was about to leave this country before the case could be heard. Was it fitting, then, under such circumstances, that the House should not do its utmost to have evidence in a case which was so material? Were they to omit this opportunity of getting at that evidence, which it was alleged was so material, on the mere prospect that had been held out to them, that the committee might adjourn its sittings until the gallant Officer's return. That gallant Officer was going abroad, and, as it was to be supposed, acting there with a similar gallantry that had distinguished him upon former occasions, they could not be quite so certain that he would ever come back again. That, then, being the case, they found the Attorney-general ridiculing, and with justice, the idea that what Sir T. Cochrane might state at that bar could, through the oath of another party, be made evidence. But then they could do this—if Sir T. Cochrane came to the bar, and stated that he had documents in his possession material to a case then pending, means might be taken to prevent him from going out of the country. Should he be told that the House, under such circumstances, had not the power to prevent Sir T. Cochrane from going out of the country? It was to be observed, that in this case he did not impugn Sir T. Cochrane. If the Attorney-general said, that Sir T. Cochrane had not the documents in his possession, he must believe the assertion, and in that case would vote with the Attorney-general. It was not denied, that Sir T. Cochrane had the documents in his possession. Here there was no impeachment on the Government that it sent Sir T. Cochrane purposely out of the way; but then they were to recollect, that they were now laying down a general rule, and that, although the present Government would not do any such thing, yet another government might come hereafter that would have no such scruples. Here Sir T. Cochrane was put to no unnecessary inconvenience. All that was required was, that he should come to the Bar and tell them if he had the documents which it was considered necessary should be produced. If Sir T. Cochrane said "No," then there was an end to the investigation, and Sir T. Cochrane could go on his foreign mission. In the one case there could be no inconvenience to Sir T. Cochrane; but, on the other hand, the greatest loss might accrue to the parties, and the greatest injustice be done to them. Sir T. Cochrane had been served with a summons to attend, and was bound to appear as a witness. If he did not attend, it was said to be in the power of Parliament to punish him; but then let them recollect, that this Parliament might be at an end before Sir T. Cochrane returned to England, and the next Parliament would not punish him for a fault of which he was guilty with respect to this. Supposing a party had been served with a *subpœna ad test*, before one of the ordinary courts of justice, and that the party receiving it declared that he would not attend and give evidence, would it be contended that such a declaration would not be made a ground of attachment with the Court of Queen's Bench? There would be little hesitation in such a case with a court, that considered its authority thus set at defiance in taking care that the party should be in such custody as that he would be certain of being found on the day of trial. It appeared to him, that all the justice of the case required a compliance with the motion. There could be no inconvenience to the gallant Officer, if he could not give material evidence; while, if he could, his absence might be attended with the greatest inconvenience to the parties. If the allegation of the petitioner were true, it was his opinion that they could not refuse the motion without doing very great injury.

The *Solicitor-General* understood the motion of the hon. Member to be founded upon these facts. A petition had been presented against the return of the hon. Member himself and another hon. Member, and now there was a petition setting forth a correspondence between the solicitor for the sitting Members and Sir T. Cochrane, with respect to letters which were alleged to be of importance. It then went on to state that Sir T. Cochrane was going abroad, and then the motion was made that Sir T. Cochrane be directed to attend at the Bar of the House. Now, it appeared contrary to principle, that a person should attend at the Bar to give evidence respecting a controverted election. The House had not now the trial of election petitions. They were to be tried under an act of the Legislature. It was not the House, but a particular tribunal, that was to decide these cases, and the witnesses were bound to attend there, for the purpose of being examined on oath. Witnesses, too, were bound to produce papers and documents. It was there, and there alone, these matters were to be tried. Here the proposition was, that a gentleman who had been served with a warrant should, because summoned be compelled to appear at the Bar. The hon. and learned Member for Cork said, it was not for the purpose of the person undergoing examination at the Bar; but he said, that it was that the House might have the power of preventing him from going abroad. If it were for that purpose, it was doing that which no court of justice would do. He entirely disagreed with the hon. Member for Cork, when he affirmed, that a witness being served with a summons, and saying, that he would not attend, that that person would be taken into custody. Such a course of proceeding in any court of justice was entirely unprecedented in this country. A witness was bound to obey the summons of a court of justice. He was liable to an action if he did not do so; and if he did not obey the order of the court he might be attached. This might be done; but then he denied, that the Queen's Bench had the power of imprisoning a person for the purpose of examining him. He spoke now of the ordinary process in trials at Westminster. Here it was proposed, because it was alleged, that a person could give evidence and produce papers, and that he was going out of the country, that he should be committed to the custody of the Sergeant-at-arms. Such a course of proceeding would surely be most extraordinary. Why were they not to proceed with election petitions as with ordinary trials in their courts of justice? If he, himself, had a trial coming on in the Queen's Bench, and he had summoned Sir Thomas Cochrane as a witness, then, if Sir Thomas did not choose to attend, he would be liable to punishment; but surely the Queen's Bench would not interfere to prevent him going out of the country on a mission from his Sovereign. One could not help seeing that this was the case of a sitting Member, and here he asked for that which had nothing to do with the last election, as he understood the correspondence sought for did not refer to the last election. [Mr. *Wason:* No, no; not so.] As it appeared to him, there was no statement, that Sir Thomas Cochrane had interfered with the last election. If the House wished for additional powers beyond those conferred by the Grenville Act, then it might, by an Act of Parliament, seek to have the powers which were given to the Queen's Bench. By a recent act, where a witness was not likely to attend from illness, or because he was going to leave the country, he might be examined before a master, and also cross-examined, and then the document could be read afterwards on the trial. If it were thought right by them, the same powers might be given. They might improve the Grenville Act, and give the House of Commons in such cases the power that was now possessed by the Queen's Bench. That which occurred in this case might occur in every case; and then, where it was stated, that a person was not likely to appear before an election committee, that House must have the parties examined at the Bar instead of before an election committee. He put it to the hon. Gentleman not to press his motion to a division, because he was sure, that a little reflection must convince him, that it was one to which the House could not accede. If the hon. Gentleman considered there was a defect in the existing law, and that their powers should be assimilated to those of the courts of Westminster, it was a fit subject for legislation; but it was not in the power of the House to assume that others would neglect their duty towards that House, or that the extraordinary means that he proposed could be adopted. If the hon. Gentleman pressed his motion to a division, he must vote against him.

Mr. *O'Connell* was surprised the hon. and learned Gentleman should have so totally mistaken him. The hon. and learned Gentleman had attributed to him the having stated, that a person receiving a *subpœna ad test.*, and that the witness, upon the allegation, that he was about to withdraw from the trial, would, under such circumstances, be attached. He had not said that; but it was a part of what he said, omitting a material portion. What he had said was, that a person being *subpœnaed*, and declaring his intention not to attend the trial, would not be attached forthwith, but that the declaration would be made a case for the Court of Queen's Bench attaching him. The hon. and learned Gentleman had also accused him of stating, that Sir Thomas Cochrane could not be examined at the Bar. Now, what he had said was, that Sir Thomas Cochrane could be examined as to whether he had the documents in his possession or not; and if he stated that he had, then, though his examination could not be given in evidence, the documents could.

Mr. *Aglionby* thought the hon. and learned Gentleman, the Solicitor-general, had strained his argument beyond the proper point. The real question in the present case was whether a witness, who was now within the jurisdiction of the House, but who was about to take himself out of that jurisdiction by going abroad, was, by analogy with the practice of the courts of law, amenable to its jurisdiction, and whether the House had any power to obtain the papers required for the proper information of the committee. In a court of law, if an allegation was made that a particular witness, whose evidence was material, was about to go abroad, the effect was to procure an order to examine the witness on interrogatories. If the House was to have any power to effect the ends of justice, by analogy to the courts of law, he did not see what there was incongruous in proposing to bring the gallant Officer to the Bar to examine him on interrogatories. If the hon. and learned Gentleman's view were to prevail, and any person who had documents necessary to the elucidation of a case which was to come before a committee of the House, were to be allowed to leave the country, the consequence would be that the ends of justice would be frustrated.

Mr. *T. Duncombe* said, after what he had heard from the two hon. and learned Gentlemen, the law officers of the Crown, he did not think that a sufficient case had been made out for calling Sir T. Cochrane to the Bar of the House; but he thought it was certainly right that the House should have the power of compelling a witness to give evidence, or put in documents, in any case coming before it. Sir T. Cochrane was now employed in the service of the Crown, and he thought that any officer in that position should be prevented from leaving the country. The House had a right, as representatives of the people, to require from the Ministers, for the sake of the purity of Members' seats, an assurance that, as far as they were concerned, Sir T. Cochrane should not leave the country until he had given the evidence which the warrant of the right hon. Gentleman in the Chair should demand from him. He should only add, that after the allegations made relative to the furnishing of a sum of money for the Ipswich election, it would be a disgrace to the Tory party and to the Government of the country, if this individual was allowed to go out to China, or anywhere else, before he had satisfied the demands of the House.

Sir *R. Peel* said, the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. R. Wason) had given notice of a motion, and concluded his speech with a motion, though he had felt so doubtful as to the course he should pursue that he said, if anybody else would suggest a more expedient method of proceeding, he should be ready to adopt it. After half an hour's discussion, the hon. Gentleman who seconded the motion (Mr. T. Duncombe) had admitted that it could not be sustained. He quite agreed with the hon. Gentleman that it would be a most dangerous precedent to establish, in reference to a jurisdiction now exercised under an act of Parliament, to call a witness who ought to appear before an election committee, and have him examined at the Bar of the House. It would be difficult to say how far this practice might be carried; the consequences might be such, that every Member would shrink from establishing a precedent for such a course. With respect to the analogy of the practice of the courts of justice, that had nothing to do with the present case. In these courts witnesses were examined on oath. The House had no inherent constitutional power to take such a security. They had power to send a commission to take evidence, but they did not exercise it by analogy to the practice of the courts of justice. They exercised the power under a statute, and they should not exercise that power if they did not possess it under statute—a very strong proof that they could not venture to exercise powers on the part of this House from analogy with the practice of the courts of justice. The hon. Gentleman asked him to give an assurance that Sir T. Cochrane should be detained in the country till he gave evidence. He must decline to give any answer, because he thought it required very serious consideration before any such assurance should be given. He would admit, that in this case the object assigned was a *bonâ fide* one; that the parties really believed the evidence of Sir T. Cochrane to be material, and that there was nothing in the case except what appeared on the face of it. But other parties, availing themselves of a precedent of this kind, might allege that which they really did not feel. He apprehended that the issue of the warrant by the Speaker was almost a matter of course. Any party might go to the Speaker and say, "I deem the evidence of a certain witness to be material, and therefore request you to serve him with a warrant." The Speaker would in that case issue the warrant without undertaking any inquiry as to whether the evidence was material or not. If such an assurance as was asked for were to be given, see what a precedent would be established. The service of the country might require the immediate departure of an officer of the highest distinction to assume an important command. Were they to establish a precedent not for the interference of the House, but of any individual who chose to say that he considered the evidence of that officer to be material to an election petition? The Speaker's warrant would issue, and therefore the services of the officer must be lost to the country till the petition came on for trial, perhaps not before June. [Mr. *T. Duncombe*: The 11th of April.] That might be, but it had no bearing on his argument. If the assurance was given, the officer must be detained, if necessary, till the 10th of August. The hon. Gentleman had shown that he was open to conviction in this matter; he thought he had proved that he acted wisely and cautiously in declining to give a positive assurance that he would detain a distinguished officer from important public duties, not because the House of Commons interfered, but because a private individual said he thought the witness was in possession of documents which would be useful in an investigation before an election committee.

Mr. *R. Wason* was quite satisfied with the right hon. Baronet's assurance that he would consider the subject. He trusted the House would see that he had done his duty in bringing the subject before it, and under the circumstances he would not press his motion. The right hon. Baronet had dwelt on the danger of establishing a precedent by which witnesses might be prevented from leaving the country, but there was a wide distinction in the present case, inasmuch as Sir T. Cochrane had admitted himself to be a party to proceedings connected with the election.

Sir *R. Peel* observed, that what he had said was, that there would be the greatest inconvenience in establishing a precedent which might prejudice the most important interests of the national service.

Motion withdrawn.

PUBLIC BUSINESS]. Mr. *E. Buller* inquired when the right hon. Baronet, the First Lord of the Treasury, proposed going into Committee of Ways and Means?

Sir *R. Peel* said, it was his intention to proceed with no public business till the resolutions relating to the Corn-laws were disposed of by the House. The strongest complaints were made to him of the inconvenience felt in the corn-trade in consequence of the House not coming to a decision. He was not responsible for the length of the debate, nor could he interfere with the course which other Gentlemen might think fit to take, but it was of the utmost importance that the decision of the House should be pronounced on the resolutions, and that he should be enabled to bring in a bill, and, therefore, he would interpose no impediment in the way of that result.

Mr. *F. T. Baring* asked, if he was to understand that the Chancellor of the Exchequer's motion relative to the frauds in Exchequer-bills would be postponed.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, it must be postponed, unless the resolutions were passed by the House that night.

Mr. *Hawes* said, the right hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer had announced to the House, on the day previous, that he would bring on the subject of the Exchequer-bills to-morrow, yet now the right hon. Baronet said, he would not interpose any public business in the way of the passing of the resolutions. Now it was quite impossible to suppose they could all pass to-night as they were very long, and there were not only the rates of duty to be considered, but the questions connected with the averages.

Sir *R. Peel* said, he could not prevent hon. Gentlemen from debating this subject to any length they pleased. He had no right to complain; he would only repeat, that he would not bring forward any other public business till the House had an opportunity of deciding, not on the whole of the bill, but on the preliminary resolutions essential to the plan. He thought it was really only fair to the public interests, that they should apply their minds to the question before entering on any other discussion.

Mr. *C. Wood* did not think any hon. Gentleman would complain of the course which the right hon. Baronet had just announced it to be his intention to adopt, but his announcement of to-night was directly at variance with that which had been made before. It had been understood, that the debate on the motion of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton being disposed of, the subject of Exchequer-bills should be brought on on Thursday, and that on Friday the motion of the hon. Member for North Lincoln, relative to the new scale of corn duties, should be taken. The right hon. Baronet now said, as he (Mr. C. Wood) understood him, that the notice of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and all other business, was to be postponed, and that it was his intention to proceed with the debate on the Corn-law Bill from day to day. He wished to ask the right hon. Baronet if he intended to take precedence of all notices on notice days, and to move that orders have precedence of notices on notice days, till these resolutions were disposed of.

Sir *R. Peel* had no wish to interfere with the private discretion of Members, but hoped that those who had notices on the paper might feel it expedient to give way. That was all he could do, but he knew from communications he had received, that he was acting in conformity with the sense of the commercial public, who had a strong wish that the sense of the House should be taken on the corn question.

Mr. *Hawes* was perfectly satisfied with the right hon. Baronet's explanation, though it was at variance with the former announcement. He observed, that Government had fixed some important business for Wednesdays, which would have the effect of depriving private Members of their only day.

Sir *R. Peel* said, that before introducing his plan on Wednesday, he had asked permission of Members who had notices for that day. If any Member claimed the right to proceed on a Wednesday, he certainly should not be disposed to interfere, except in case of an adjourned debate.

Colonel *Rawdon* inquired, whether the noble Lord, the Secretary for Ireland, intended to bring forward the bill of which he had given notice, to remedy the defects of the law regulating Presbyterian marriages in Ireland?

Mr. *O'Connell* suggested, that as there would be no opposition to such a measure, no impediment would be thrown in the way of other important business if it were immediately introduced and speedily passed into a law.

Sir *R. Peel* was ready to admit, that such a case of special grievance should form an exception to the rule he had laid down, and he, therefore, had no doubt his noble Friend would shortly introduce a measure upon the subject.

Subject at an end.

BUILDING REGULATIONS AND BOROUGH IMPROVEMENTS.] The *Speaker* informed the House, that the two bills—the Buildings Regulation Bill, and Boroughs Improvement Bill—at the head of the list of orders for a second reading, contained provisions, as coming from the Lords, which were inconsistent with the privileges of the House of Commons.

Mr. *F. Maule* felt he had no other course than to move, "That the Buildings Regulation Bill be read a second time this day six months." He hoped, however, that there would be no objection to refer the provisions of both bills to a committee up stairs, which should have the power of taking evidence as to details with the view of producing measures which would meet the general concurrence of the House. It was of the utmost importance, that an end should be put to those disgraceful scenes which daily occurred in large towns in consequence of speculators, who were in the habit of running up houses of the worst description for the lower classes of the community.

Lord *Ashley* very much regretted, that it was necessary in consequence of some informality to postpone the consideration of this bill for so long a period. He had visited many of the places alluded to, both in London and in other manufacturing towns, and he could therefore speak from experience of the absolute and immediate necessity of some speedy legislation on this subject. The House could have no notion of the immense amount of moral and physical evil which resulted from the condition of the dwellings of the working classes in the great towns.

Viscount *Sandon* hoped they would proceed cautiously, lest, while in pursuit of certain remedies for admitted evils, they aggravated instead of curing them. He trusted the committee would produce such a bill as would be adapted to the various localities of the country.

Sir *J. Graham* cordially and entirely concurred in the course about to be taken with these two bills. This was the second time these two bills had come down from the other House of Parliament, having been founded on an investigation before a committee of that House. It was the duty of the House of Commons, as a representative body, to look carefully into the details of these bills, deeply affecting, as they did, the lives and comfort of a large class of her Majesty's subjects. In the last Session of Parliament the right hon. Gentleman opposite had introduced another measure connected with the drainage; on the part of the Government he had to announce his intention to bring forward a measure on the same subject, founded upon that formerly introduced by the right hon. Gentleman. With respect to the second bill on the paper, he was not prepared to pledge himself to many of the provisions it contained. There was one important provision, for instance, in the Boroughs' Improvement Bill, to which he had a serious objection, enabling town-councils to mortgage the borough-rate without any limitation for the purpose of making these improvements. That was certainly rather a dangerous power, and one to which he would not at once subscribe. But it would be best considered when the measure was again brought before Parliament, and he earnestly hoped that no delay would take place in that respect. He should have no difficulty in coming to an understanding as to the composition of the committee to which they should be referred. It should be a fair and impartial committee. He did anticipate the utmost possible advantage from passing some such measure into law.

Buildings Regulation Bill read a second time that day six months.

Mr. *F. Maule*, in proposing the same course with reference to the Boroughs Improvement Bill, expressed the great satisfaction he felt in hearing that the right hon. Baronet had undertaken to bring forward a bill on the subject of drainage, founded on the sanatory report of the Poor-law Commissioners. He should most readily give his humble assistance to the right hon. Baronet in this matter, and he did hope that great good would be effected by the three measures in conjunction.

Mr. *M. Philips* was glad that such an arrangement had been made between the two right hon. Gentlemen. The Drainage Bill would be of the utmost importance. It began at the right end; for most speculators ran up their buildings, leaving the drainage to the very last, as a mere matter of chance. He wished to know whether all the bills would be referred to the same committee.

Sir *J. Graham* said, that the Buildings Regulation Bill and the Boroughs Improvement Bill should be referred to the same committee; but the Drainage Bill should be introduced on the responsibility of her Majesty's Government.

Borough Improvement Bill to be read a second time that day six months.

The *Speaker* left the Chair—House in committee on the

CORN-LAWS — MR. VILLIERS'S MOTION — TOTAL REPEAL — ADJOURNED DEBATE (FOURTH DAY).] Mr. *Ewart* said, that he would have preserved silence for the present, but that it appeared to him he should have been guilty of suppression of opinion, amounting almost to insincerity, if he did not express the disappointment which he, and he believed his constituents also, felt at the measure proposed by the right hon. Baronet the First Lord of the Treasury. On the 17th of September last, the right hon. Baronet said that it was not likely he could go through the labours daily imposed on him, if he could not possess the liberty of proposing to Parliament those measures which he thought conducive to the public welfare. If there was an assurance from the right hon. Baronet that he had acted up to that declaration, he could not for a moment disbelieve him; but he must state that there was, on the part of the country, a strong feeling that he had been acting under other influences than those of his own mind; that there had been a power behind the Cabinet, greater than the Cabinet itself. He believed if it had been left free to the right hon. Baronet himself, he would have, in following the dictates of his own opinions, given them a measure more conducive to the interests of the country than the present one. He believed the right hon. Baronet would have done so without adopting the system of the sliding-scale, or that of a fixed duty. There was another course open to the right hon. Baronet, which it would have been well if he had adopted. He might have adopted the principle of a duty declining from year to year, until at last it was entirely extinguished. Such a course would have been sound policy. Until some such principle was adopted the right hon. Baronet would neither see the country at rest nor agitation still. When the right hon. Baronet at the close of the last Session requested time to consider this important question, the country had a right to expect that the proposal which he might introduce would be mature and might be final. But they had heard the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department declare that so far from anticipating that the measure would be final, he expected that it would continue to undergo continual changes. Instead of adopting the doctrine of finality, the right hon. Baronet had adopted the doctrine of perpetual mutability; and they would seem to be destined to witness a succession of changes until the people saw those principles carried into effect which they had so long urged in vain upon the Legislature. It would appear, therefore, that not only was the scale of the Government a sliding scale, but that the Cabinet itself was a sliding Cabinet. Such was the only inference which he could draw from the declaration of the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department. All parties agreed that great distress prevailed in the country, and they only differed as to the causes of that distress, and the nature of the proper remedy. The right hon. Baronet had attributed the distress to over-circulation, to over-production, and to the monetary derangements in the United States. But the right hon. Baronet took the worst means to reduce that over-circulation, or create a market for over-production; and, in addition, his measure was the least adapted to place our trade with America on a more solid basis. At what time were they taking this course with regard to the United States of America? If ever it was incumbent on this country to liberalize its commercial regulations with America—it was at the present moment. At this time a new tariff was undergoing discussion in America, the duties were to be lowered by it, and the question would come on in Congress in July next. This was, therefore, the time to offer to that country those commercial conditions which would extend and not limit their intercourse with this country. There were other inducements, too, which ought to influence them in giving every facility to the trade in corn. At the present moment the Northern States were maintaining the principle of protection to their own manufactures; the Southern States, on the other hand, were in favour of the introduction of manufactures from other countries, and freedom of trade; while the Middle States were in a state of suspense. Now, therefore, was the time to bring over those Middle States to the side of this country; and yet this was the time that was selected for the purpose of introducing a measure like the present, which prevented this country giving to the United States of America the trade in corn which would be so beneficial to the growers of that country and the consumers of this. When they talked of the distracted state of the monetary system of America, they ought to consider that they had caused it; they had refused to take the corn from America, and the result was that the Americans were obliged to send to this country payments in other ways. It was from the restrictions that had been established in this country that the monetary disturbances had arisen in America. The Corn-laws were constantly unsettling the commercial and manufacturing relations between this and other countries, and no prosperity could last for any length of time until the question of the Corn-laws was settled. Whether the state of commerce in this country were prosperous or otherwise, still they did their countrymen this injustice, they prevented them from extending their trade, and they had no more right to prevent the extension of their trade than they had to prevent its creation; a prevention of the future was as bad as an usurpation of the past. As long as they laid their restrictions on the intelligence and enterprise of their countrymen, it was impossible they could ever know any real and permanent prosperity. It was true they were consoled by the right hon. Baronet in a statement that their exports had increased; but there were two sorts of exports, one a sound system, arising from a demand abroad, the other a forced system, proceeding from the want of demand at home. Nothing had been more clearly proved than that this was the fact with respect to the cotton trade. If they took the return of the whole amount spun, and deducted it from the whole amount exported, the remainder would give the quantity taken for home consumption. The quantity taken for home consumption last year, was less than the year preceding it, the year 1840; that showed whatever the state of the exports might be, the home consumer was in a state of distress and depression, The total weight of cotton spun in 1840, was about 406,000,000lbs.; the quantity exported, was 229,000,000lbs., which left 177,000,000lbs. for home consumption. By the same calculation, the quantity for home consumption last year, was 111,000,000lbs., being a diminution of 59,000,000lbs. from 1840. This export would still go on, because the manufacturers, finding they had no chance of a demand in the home market were obliged to make consignments—a most dangerous system of commercial policy—but blind to the consequences, they ran the risk of selling at the smallest possible profit, rather than not sell at all. The destitution of the home consumer was occasioned by their refusing to extend commerce, and give employment to the industrious classes. They recognised the necessity of extending commerce, and cheapening food by the very measure which the Government had proposed. They had admitted his premises, and had adopted the principle for which he was contending. It had been stated in the course of these debates, that it had been our original commercial policy to place restriction on the supply of the food of the people. He denied that such had been the case. Up to the year 1771 the home supply of corn had been sufficient for the consumption of the country. In that year a committee of the House had sat to consider the cause of the distressed state of the country. General Pownall had been the chairman of that committee, and Mr. Burke had been one of its members. Mr. Burke had then declared that the most momentous of all meddling was the meddling with the food of the people. That committee had reported that the cause of the distress was the great extension of our commerce, which had rendered the supply of corn inadequate to supply the wants of the people. The result of that recommendation was the establishment of a free-trade in corn. For the thirty years following they had had a free-trade in corn, and the report of the committee which had sat in 1821, a report drawn up by Mr. Huskisson, had stated that never had any period of the history of this country been so marked by prosperity as the thirty years between 1772 and 1802, and he would refer all those who denounced free-trade doctrines as being merely theoretical to the report of that committee, as affording a practical illustration of the benefits to be derived from a free-trade in corn. He was much surprised at another omission in the statements of the other side. How came it, he would ask, that the statements made by the Government officers before the imports committee had been wholly withdrawn from consideration? How did it happen that the right hon. Baronet, or other hon. Members opposite, did not cite in their favour the opinions of Mr. Hume, Mr. Porter, or Mr. M'Gregor, all of whom expressed themselves favourable either to the immediate or ultimate freedom of the trade in corn? There was another inquiry of which they heard nothing, and which, with the exception of Mr. Huskisson's report in the year 1821 and that drawn up by Lord Durham on the state of the Canadas, was one of the most important which had been drawn up in the country. He alluded to the report of the Handloom Weavers' Commission. That Commission recommended that the duties on corn should lessen from year to year till there was no duty at all; and it came to that conclusion after the most extensive and accurate inquiry. When they had such authority on their side for the abolition of the duties on corn, who could wonder that systems of agitation should exist in the country, or that they were based upon anything but reason? It appeared to him to be an agitation of reason and not of force. In former times they had had the revolutions of a Cade or a Tyler, and not the peaceable, reasonable agitation of Mr. Acland and Mr. Sydney Smith. He did not know how hon. Gentlemen could complain of an agitation carried on by the force of reason, and not of the passions. He was convinced that if the just claims of the people were not satisfied, and if they allowed that species of agitation to continue, it would be fraught with the greatest danger to the social system. He had traced the agitation, not only in the metropolis, but in Lancashire, Staffordshire, Yorkshire, and in Scotland? and he was convinced that until the object was attained that agitation never would slumber, never would cease. He believed that the miserable apology for a remedy would give no satisfaction, and never could be final, When the right hon. Baronet brought in Catholic Emancipation, he introduced it boldly, scorning all minor exceptions. The right hon. Baronet was asked, would he not demand any securities, or impose any restrictions? He answered that he would not. That he would concede the principle, because he knew that until it was conceded, there would be no repose. Why did not the right hon. Baronet act so in the present case? Why did he not show the same boldness? However, he (Mr. Ewart) was convinced that the day would come when the right hon. Baronet would regret that he had not done so. He must remind the right hon. Baronet that, as Burke said, "Modification was the resource of a weak and undecided mind." The course of the right hon. Baronet, was not only condemned, by the indignant voice of a suffering people, but it would be condemned by the mature verdict of a reflecting and impartial posterity.

Mr. *F. F. Berkeley* would vote for the repeal of the Corn-laws, because he believed them to be unjust in principle, and mischievous in effect. Many hon. Members had expressed their great astonishment and virtuous indignation at the proposal to repeal the Corn-laws. Remembering, that those laws had always been opposed by statesmen of the greatest eminence, he was quite at a loss to understand such expressions. He was for the repeal of the Corn-laws, because he held the great practical doctrine, that all commerce should be benefitted, and, because the Corn-laws especially, as interfering with the sustenance of the people, did violence to that doctrine. When the Corn-law was proposed in 1815, it was opposed by several great statesmen. The language then held by illustrious Princes of the Blood, and by several politicians of the first standing in this country was, that the necessity ought to be irresistible, which could authorise Parliament to tamper with the sustenance of the people, and to impede the free sale and purchase of that article on which depended the existence of so large a portion of the community. He had the same authority for saying, that those laws could never produce plenty, cheapness, or steadiness of price. If he was in error, he shared the error with the late Lord Grenville, with the late Duke of Buckingham, and with his Royal Highness, the Duke of Sussex, whose sentiments, whenever promulgated, would command respect, and arose equally from the soundness of his head, and from the goodness of his heart. Among the petitions which had been presented, praying for a repeal of the Corn-laws, he had had the honour to present one from the city of Bristol, which had received 25,000 signatures; and agreeing with the hon. Member for Birmingham, that the petitions presented to that House, were not received with the attention which was due to their importance, he felt himself bound to raise his voice on behalf of those petitioners who had so strongly expressed their opinions on the subject of the Corn-laws. In one petition which he had the honour to present, signed by 17,799 individuals, the language was most remarkable. At the same time, that it was most respectful, it was firm. It expressed the great sorrows felt by the people; and he begged to say, that having examined the names of the petitioners, he had found them to be men who were not only incapable of a falsehood, but of even stooping to the meanness of exaggerration. It stated the belief of the petitioners that there was a growing dissatisfaction among the people towards that House. They believed, that the prayers of the people had been neglected. They prayed the House not to drive famine to despair. When he reflected, that the inhabitants of the city of Bristol were not so miserably wretched as the people in other parts of the country, he did feel, that petitions so worded, and expressing such sentiments, demanded the utmost attention and respect of the House. Whilst on the subject of the constituency which he had the honour to represent, he might probably be allowed to refer to the speech of the noble Lord, the Member for Cambridgeshire, who alluded to his constituency. In speaking of political agitations, past and present, the noble Lord, in alluding to the agitation of the Reform Bill, inferred the folly of that agitation as connected with rotten boroughs, and thought the folly was proved by the failure of the Reform Bill; he added, that Nottingham Castle was sacked, and Bristol was burnt in their agitation against rotten boroughs. A more foul slander against a people had never before been uttered by any hon. Gentleman or noble Lord in that House. He would defy the noble Lord to produce one tittle of evidence, to show, that the people of Bristol in their agitation against rotten boroughs, had been actuated by any such desire. The effects to which the noble Lord had alluded, were the operations of a lawless mob, and were caused by the inefficiency and want of judgment of the magistracy. They were taunted with being a small minority, and an isolated body in that House. He was perfectly contented to put up with the taunt, because he knew they were not an isolated body out of doors. Let hon. Gentlemen reflect, that they had had majorities on former occasions; which had fallen before the expressed opinions of the people. In his humble thinking, the people at the present moment felt the deepest indignation at the manner in which they were treated. They felt the utmost discontent at the measure brought forward by the right hon. Baronet. They felt, that it was a mockery and an insult, and unless they were conciliated, the most disastrous consequences would follow.

Mr. *Thornley* considered, that the question before the committee was the question of protective duties, for the right hon. Baronet, in submitting his resolutions to the House, had advocated them, not as a matter of revenue, but as a protection to the landed interest. To protective duties he had always been opposed; he considered that duties should be for revenue, and not for protection; and, considering the sufferings of the working classes, borne with such exemplary patience, and regarding also the state of the trade of the country, he should cordially support the motion of his hon. Friend and colleague, and give his vote for the total repeal of the duties on corn. He was opposed both to a fixed duty and a sliding-scale; but he must say, that the evils attending a sliding-scale were far the greater of the two. They were a bounty upon importations from the near ports, and altogether unfair to distant ports, especially to the United States of America. To that country our exports averaged about 8,000,000 a year, and they were articles highly manufactured, including much outlay of wages. There had been an impression that the United States were not capable of furnishing a supply of corn. The noble Lord, the Member for North Lancashire, had stated in his speech at Lancaster, in September, that prices were too high in America for any large supply to be furnished; and Mr. M'Culloch, in a pamphlet published last year, had stated that not only would America not furnish a supply, but it was well known she had herself received large supplies of wheat from Dantzic. Now 1837 was the only year in which America had imported largely; she then took about 500,000 quarters. The harvest had been unfavourable, but there was also an immense issue of bank paper in America, raising the price of all commodities, whether imported or of home growth. But even in that year America exported upwards of 300,000 barrels of flour, equal to 200,000 quarters of wheat. The noble Lord, the Secretary for the Colonies, in his speech at Lancaster last year, also alluded to the high price of corn in America, and intimated that we could not look to a large supply from that quarter. But only two days since, hon. Members had received a printed paper, published by the Board of Trade, containing an account of the exportation of flour from America, by which it appeared that the average export for forty-nine years had been about 900,000 barrels per annum equal to about 560,000 quarters of wheat; and besides that, they exported a great deal of Indian corn, meal, rye, beef, and pork; and that flour had been exported by America, not into any colonies of which she enjoyed the exclusive market, but in competition with other countries. On looking to the capabilities of America for growing corn, they must also remember that there was no inducement to them to send corn to this country so long as they were shut out by a sliding-scale. Intelligent gentlemen from America had represented the working of the sliding-scale as most prejudicial to the trade between the United States and Great Britain; and he then held in his hand a copy of a memorial which had been presented to the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government by the merchants of the American Chamber of Commerce at Liverpool. It was dated in October, 1841, and the memorialists there said, that the effect of the present system had been strikingly exemplified during the previous two months, when foreign corn from European ports was admitted at a low duty, whilst America could not, from her distance, avail herself of the same advantage; and they concluded by stating their opinion, that the most effectual remedy for those evils would be in imposing a moderate fixed duty instead of a sliding-scale. Messrs. Maury, of Liverpool, stated in their circular, that from the 9th of August, when the duty on wheat was 22*s.* 8*d.* per quarter, to 20th of September, when the duty was 1*s.*, the importation of wheat from the continent of Europe into five of the principal ports of this kingdom had exceeded 600,000 quarters, whilst from the United States not one bushel of wheat or one barrel of flour had been received. He was justified, then, in saying that the sliding-scale was unfair to countries at a distance, and did not put them on the same footing with countries that were nearer. He was the more anxious to press that on the notice of the Government, because the Congress of the United States was then assembled and considering the tariff of the country. On the 30th of June next the duties on imported goods, under Mr. Clay's bill, would fall to 20 per cent., but the manufacturers were pressing upon Congress the duty of raising the tariff, and excluding our manufactures, whilst we excluded their corn. Unless, therefore, we legislated satisfactorily to America, that is, unless we put her upon a fair footing as to our Corn-laws, there was the utmost danger that our woollens, our cottons, and our iron would be excluded from the American market, and their place supplied by goods from Belgium and Germany. According, then, to the measure passed in that House respecting the trade in corn and flour with America, would Great Britain have that great market open or closed against her manufactures. He had that morning received a letter from a gentleman largely interested in the American trade, suggesting that the trade in corn with that country would be put upon an equality with the trade of other countries, if the duty founded upon a six weeks' average should apply to ports in Europe without the Straits of Gibraltar, and that the duty from all other places should be upon the average of thirteen weeks. There were other objections to a sliding scale of duties; when our own crops were of bad qualities, the average prices fell, and the duty advanced, at a time when we most required an import of good corn. Then if a ship made a long passage her cargo might be charged with a higher duty, and if a ship put into a port from distress, and had to discharge her cargo, the duty on it might be ruinous. In all the remarks that had been made upon the averages, it was stated they were unfairly taken in order to lower the duty; but he held a circular of Messrs. Scott, of Liverpool, who stated that many more false averages had been made to keep down the averages than with an opposite intention. He was informed the addition of towns from which averages were to be taken would lower them 5*s.* to 6*s.* per quarter, and raise the duty in proportion. He denied that dependence on foreign countries advanced the price of imported articles. He was convinced that freedom of trade caused a regular supply, and at steady and cheap rates. The Vice-president of the Board of Trade had alluded to fluctuations in the price of cotton; no doubt prices had fluctuated, but look at the result: the United States and India were competing in the growth of cotton, and the supply was abundant, and prices lower than they ever were before. This would not have been the case if the duty had fluctuated; indeed, had cotton been liable to a sliding scale, the manufacture would never have taken root in the country. It was protective duties which raised prices. A paper moved for by the late Chancellor of the Exchequer showed the consumption of sugar in 1840, and as we excluded foreign sugars our prices were doubled, and we paid for our sugar that year five millions more than other nations paid which had a free trade in sugar. There was, in fact, no rise in sugar, for that article was cheaper than it ever was before, but we were not permitted to consume it. Our tariff prohibited what was good and cheap, and compelled us to buy what was bad and dear. Colonial sugar was now double the price of foreign sugar. In the same manner, coffee in this country was 50 per cent., he believed, dearer than foreign coffee. It was with great satisfaction that he had heard the right hon. Baronet say that he intended to revise the import duties: for they certainly were the most discreditable tariff under which any nation ever laboured. Our colonies did not supply sufficient coffee, and so our tariff said, "You may bring in foreign coffee at a certain duty, but you must take it to the Cape of Good Hope first." And so actually a number of ships were employed in taking coffee from the Brazils to the Cape of Good Hope, and then bringing it to this country. He trusted, however, that when the right. hon. Baronet did revise the tariff, that would be altered. The people continually strove, and continually exerted their increasing skill and industry to augment their comforts and to promote their happiness; and it was the Government which interfered to prevent their success. The people, in a few years, had expended sixty millions in constructing railways, and every one admitted the advantage of so cheap and expeditious a mode of travelling, but all this time the Government was refusing to admit foreign coffee, from the Brazils, unless it was first sent to the Cape of Good Hope. He felt strongly that they had now arrived at that critical position, that they could not go on as they had been doing. The embarrassment of the merchants and manufacturers of this country had existed for three or four years, and the sufferings of the labouring classes could scarcely be described, though they had borne them in a most creditable manner. But the people had looked into the causes of that distress, and were satisfied that our commercial tariff was at the root of the evil, and that the most oppressive part of our legislation was the exclusion of foreign corn. He trusted that shortly something would be done to relieve their sufferings. He was altogether disappointed at the measure of the right hon. Baronet, and he looked forward with very little satisfaction to what was before them, for no improvement had taken place in trade since the measure was announced, and the condition of the country was most serious.

Mr. *Hastie* would not, at that late stage of the debate, enter at large into the merits of the question, but should confine himself to a few statements and calculations, to show that the repeal of the Corn-laws would reduce the income of the landowners to the extent of only 11¼ per cent. According to the best authorities, it is estimated that the present agricultural rental of the United Kingdom is nearly as follows, viz:—

England and Wales . . .	£29,500,000
Scotland	4,851,404
Ireland	12,000,000
	£46,351,404

The same authorities estimate the gross annual value of the agricultural produce of the land to be—

England and Wales . . .	£132,500,000
Scotland	22,925,000
Ireland	44,500,000
	£199,925,000

Now as the grain or corn crops are those alone which will be affected by the motion of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, it is necessary to ascertain the quantity and value of this branch of the produce under the existing law and past years of production; and taking the price of each description of corn at the average of the past thirteen years since the passing of the existing act, the quantities and value, taking the former according to the most accurate estimates made by Mr. M'Culloch, it will be as follows, viz:—

			£
Quantity of wheat estimated to be grown in the United Kingdom, including seed,	17,500,000 quarters . . .	at 56*s.* 11*d.*	49,822,000
Oats .	38,500,000	at 22*s.* 10*d.* .	43,954,000
Barley .	7,000,000	at 32*s.* 9*d.* .	11,462,000
Peas, &c. .	700,000	at 38*s.* 3*d.* .	1,338,000
			£106,576,000

The right hon. Baronet, the Member for Dorset has told the agriculturists that they will have by the proposed measure a protection of 14*s*. the quarter on wheat, and supposing the motion carried, that all duties upon the importation shall now cease, and that wheat is reduced 14*s*. the quarter, and other grain in proportion, the following would then be the gross amount of the annual produce, viz:—

	Quarters.	£.
Wheat .	17,500,000 at 43*s*. . .	37,625,000
Oats .	38,500,600 at 18*s*. 6*d*. .	35,622,000
Barley .	7,000,000 at 27*s*. 6*d*. .	9,625,000
Peas, &c.	700,000 at 33*s*. . .	1,155,000
		£84,027,000

Thus if it be correct, that this law will give a protection of 14*s*. the quarter, and that a free trade would reduce the average price of the last thirteen years by that amount, it would lessen the gross annual value of the agricultural produce by about 22,000,000, and reducing the gross annual value under the existing law from 199,925,000*l*. to 177,376,000*l*., and if it should follow, that the rent fell in proportion, it becomes a mere rule of three question, viz., If 199,925,000 : : 46,351,404 : : 177,376,000*l*. = rental of 41,123,000*l*.. or a reduction of 11¼ per cent. in the rental, this was all the reduction that would follow, taking it in the extreme, but in my opinion a free trade in corn would not reduce the average on the past thirteen years, 5*s*. the quarter at the utmost; was it then, he would ask, worth the while of the great agricultural interest of this country for so small an advantage periodically to paralyse the commerce of the country, and to expose themselves to the obloquy, and I must say, injudiciously daily cast upon them. If this law is really to be a protection of 14*s*. the quarter, let us examine how it operates upon the agricultural as well as all other labourers upon fixed wages. By the agricultural reports of various Committees of this House, it appears that the average wages of the labourers is somewhere about 8*s*. a week, or 20*l*. 16*s*. a-year; and a few evenings since in this debate, the hon. Member for Shropshire stated, that the average consumption of wheat, per annum, per head of an agricultural labourer's family, was about one quarter; now, taking the family, say wife and two children, making four in number, the consumption will be four quarters a-year, which at the right hon. Baronet's protecting duty, of 14*s*., would be a tax of 2*l*. 16*s*., or about 14 per cent. on their income, let us now compare the two cases, the landlords by this statement supposing a free trade in corn and the price to be reduced by 14*s*. the quarter, would have their rents reduced 11¼ per cent. on incomes varying from 200 to 100,000*l*. a year while it is considered no injury to the labourer in maintaining the monopoly, although he is thereby made to pay at the rate of 14 per cent. upon an income of 20*l*. a year.

Mr. *O'Connell* said, he should give his vote on this question simply upon principle, and not merely with reference to its effect upon particular interests. There was no dispute about the fact that the greatest distress prevailed throughout the British empire. That distress was not confined to any particular locality, trade, or manufacture, but was general and overwhelming. The details of the misery, destitution, and starvation, which existed in the houses of the labouring classes were enough to sicken the firmest heart. There could not be the slightest doubt of that; it could scarcely be exaggerated. Then, having that distress, what did they do to relieve it; or what did they propose to do? Nothing. The scheme of the Government would not relieve it. They said, indeed, that it did not originate with the Corn-law, and therefore their Corn-law would not relieve it. Of that he was assured; but the assertion showed, that after talking for a week or ten days, the result would be, there would be no relief. of the Corn-laws were not the cause of the distress, they should seek to relief it by the removal of the cause. He thought it was a gross imposition to assert that they were not the chief cause of it, but he thought it was equally an imposition to say they were the sole cause; for if they bestowed provisions on these poor people would they not relieve them, and did it not follow that the Legislature would give them some relief if it gave them provisions cheaper than they had them? What the people wanted was food, and that was what the House refused them. The question was—should they, by the Corn-law, keep up an unnatural price of human food? Should restrictive laws make dearer than it otherwise would be, the natural price of food, or that price at which it would be in a market open to all the world, and unshackled by any tax? Were they to have food at its natural price, or to obtain it only at an artificial—that was, a high price, produced by not leaving open the market to the world, but restricting it to a particular locality, namely, the British empire? Of course, food would be dearer in proportion to the limitation of the supply, and the supply be regulated by the limitation of the market. There might be a temporary deficiency in the harvest of one country, while in another, at the same time, there might be an abundant supply; but by their law they prevented the harvests averaging each other, and abundant harvests making compensation for scarce ones. But when they spoke of distress as universally admitted, was it only distress of the present day or the present year? Had not their discussions proved that it has been increasing day after day and year after year?—that it had become heavier and heavier until it had become so unendurable that they actually boasted of the patience with which the people suffered it? Suffered what? Deprivation of the food of life. And for what purpose? To make more wealthy the landed interest. This was a question between the rich and poor. His hon. Friend (Mr. Ewart) below him had demonstrated it by showing that nine-tenths of the earnings of the poor were expended in provisions, while of the income of the rich man there was so expended not a hundredth part. Therefore the pressure was unequal; and let it be remembered, that it was made more severe by being imposed upon the poor man for the benefit of the rich. And who was to decide this question? Would they leave to the Chartists, or to his fellow Radicals, or to the operative class, the decision on the Corn-laws? Would they be content that the Chartists should call a convention to decide on the continuance of a tax on food? Certainly not, because it was known that they would decide against it. Then what right had the representatives of the landed interest to decide this question between themselves and the poor. The operatives were not represented there; the House was packed against them, and on this subject their position was that of an unfortunate man whose life or fortune was at stake before a partial judge and a packed jury. He did not accuse them of wilfully or corruptly perverting their legislative powers for their own purposes—they only acted in accordance with the dictates of human nature; but he did complain that they had, and that in pursuance of those dictates they exercised those powers to injure and oppress the poor for their own exclusive benefit. The entire working class was interested in the abolition of these laws. He had heard it said that in seeking to abolish those laws they wished to take from agricultural labourers some advantages they had, but he denied that they had an interest in the prosperity of the landlords. The Gentlemen opposite might deny the assertion, but he had documents to confirm what he said. It was proved before a late committee that when the proprietors were in distress the labourers were better off, and one of the witnesses said, that it was a consolation to him to find that the state of the agricultural labourer was satisfactory when distress affected the farmer and the landowner. Why did he quote that? To show them that the agricultural labourer had as much interest in cheap bread as any other; at all events, that he was not interested in dear bread, though the farmer and the proprietor might be. He could not advert to his own countrymen in illustration of his views; their continuous misery put them out of the general rule, and he therefore confined himself to this country to show that the labouring classes had no interest in the continuance of those laws. They had had the question well discussed, at all events, well talked over, but he would confine himself to a narrower compass. Would they insist on levying a tax on the food of the poor consumer? That was the real question, disguise it as they might. The fallacies uttered in defence of the Corn-laws had failed one after the other. Even the hon. Baronet, the Member for Wiltshire, did not attempt to prove that dear corn paid high wages. That was a favourite fallacy, until facts proved it to be such; but it had failed, as every other fallacy would fail. The poor were screaming out for food, and should the House continue to show cold-blooded indifference, as it would appear to them, to their interests, and a selfish preference to their own? If it were only doubtful whether this measure would relieve them, for Heaven's sake could they not make the experiment? He should not vote for a motion for gradual reduction. He thought the merit of the present motion was in the word "now." He knew advantage would be taken of his admission, and that his authority might be rated higher than it deserved; but the importance of the motion consisted in its affording immediate relief. If the ports were opened to-morrow, the supply which now made corn dear would then make it cheap. Speculation would bring in a glut of corn, and he regarded the advantage of the experiment would be in that glut. The present measure had been tried, and proved ineffectual. Why not, then, show a disposition to improve it? If they had no other plan, why not adopt the present motion? But, why should he waste time? Gentlemen opposite had been returned to support these Corn-laws. They were confident in their overwhelming majority, but let them remember the limited franchise, and above all, that those most interested were not represented. The right hon. Baronet had been previously in power (he spoke not of his last administration, when he held office but not power), but how did his administration terminate? The night was rendered luminous by the fires of blazing property. The day was rendered dangerous by tumults, confusion, assaults on civil magistrates, and armed meetings, followed by imprisonments, banishments, and execution. The City itself was so disturbed that even the Monarch, beloved as he was, dared not visit its chief magistrate. Such were the characteristics of the close of his late Government; and he would therefore implore the right hon. Baronet not now to provide a euthanasia to his Administration amongst the despair of manufacturers, and the screams of wretches driven to despair by the sordid avarice of the agriculturists.

Colonel *Conolly* was not disposed to vote for a motion to repeal the Corn-laws, and wished to see as much protection extended to the agricultural interest as was consistent with the support of the home market, and, at the same time, with the maintenance of the interest of the manufacturer. He had the sincerest compassion for the people's distresses, but he would not lend himself to that which he was convinced would turn to its aggravation rather than relief, by leaving the country dependent upon foreign, and perhaps hostile nations, for the greater portion of the supply of the food of the community. He repelled with scorn the imputations which had been cast upon the landed interest, and would support the measure of the right hon. Baronet, which he considered would give great relief, and went quite as far as was consistent with the general interest of the country, and because he did not think that any abatement of the price of corn which should be accompanied by the destruction of the agriculture of the country, would be beneficial to the people. He believed, on the other hand, that the question of Corn-law abolition was one of the shallowest impositions which was ever attempted to be palmed off upon a nation. In the ardour of their enthusiasm, in the heat of their passion, what did the hon. Members opposite propose? Why, they proposed to give drafts for the alleviation of the distress of which they complained, on everybody but themselves. They abused and vilified the landed interest and those who represented the landed interest, and yet their object was to keep their own pockets closed, while they took the money out of the pockets of those whom they so loudly denounced. It was not a little extraordinary that those who wished themselves to be regarded as the friends of the people, should put the axe to the root of the agricultural interest—the foundation of the prosperity of all the other interests of this country. Vast numbers of the hon. Members opposite had admitted the proposition of the right hon. Baronet to be a great improvement in the law, and there could now be no doubt that it had received the sanction of the agriculturists throughout the country generally. Notwithstanding all the defamatory speeches which had been made, there was no doubt that the Government plan had given the utmost approbation. He regarded the proposition of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton as injurious to the public creditor as to the landed interest. At present, the public creditor received twenty-eight millions a year out of the resources of the country; and, if these resources were impaired, must not the public creditor suffer? When Mr. Grote was a Member of that House, what was his declaration in respect of the drain of bullion occasioned by the importation of corn? Why, he said—and he was at the time advocating a free trade in corn—that, if two bad harvests were to ensue, this country would be reduced to a state of national bankruptcy. He wished to keep faith with the public creditor, to sustain agriculture, but above all, he was desirous of rendering this country as far as possible, independent of other countries for the supply of corn; and in doing this he was convinced he was acting for the permanent advantage of the manufacturing interests. He had always voted against the propositions of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, and should do so on this occasion, because, coming as he did from an agricultural county, he felt it his duty to do so. He might be told that he also was boiling over with self-interest, but in supporting the plan of the Government he was simply actuated by the wish to protect the interests of an increasing population. He was astonished at the declaration made by the hon. and learned member for Cork, that the Corn-laws operated only for the benefit of the landlords, and not of the labourers. Such a declaration was ridiculous, was mocking the understanding, and in Ireland, at least the people, could not be imposed upon by such statements, because they knew perfectly well that the landlords could not be injured without the labourers being wounded in their most essential interests. He had travelled in most parts of the world, and from the observations he had made, he could state that it was idle to imagine that we could barter or exchange our manufactures for foreign corn. It was quite clear that this could not be done in Poland and Prussian Poland, or along the banks of the Vistula. The agricultural population of those parts had not the means of purchasing our manufactures. They paid their rents in kind, and it was their over-production which alone was sent into the markets. The same observation would equally apply to other countries; and if such were the case what other effect could they anticipate from the repeal of the Corn-laws but the withdrawal of an amount of bullion from this country, which would totally derange the currency? Was it for such results as these, he asked, that they should neglect their own peasantry, or did they wish to bring the agricultural population of this country down to the level of the peasantry of Poland? This was a shallow fallacy, a wretched delusion, and an audacious imposition; and his only wonder was that any hon. Gentleman could for a single moment give it his sanction. His desire was to maintain the efficiency of the Government, while he looked to the comforts of every class of the people, and therefore it was his determination to give every proposition like that of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton his most strenuous opposition. He believed that the Government plan would tend to the general interests of the country, and he was especially glad that the right hon. Baronet had not lost sight of the importance of affording all due encouragement to agriculture. He trusted that the right hon. Baronet would succeed in carrying his proposition, and that the hon. Member for Wolverhampton would be left in a miserable minority.

Mr. *Hawes* said, that after so protracted a debate, he would ask the attention of the House only for a short time. In approaching the subject, he fully appreciated the magnitude of the interests at stake, and with a sincere desire to do justice to all. He should support the hon. Member for Wolverhampton on the present occasion, and he was perfectly prepared to back his opinion by voting for the total repeal of all duties on corn. He was prepared to show that the plan proposed by Ministers up to very high prices, would still have the effect of excluding all competition with foreign countries. In saying this, he was anxious to do full justice to the proposal of her Majesty's Ministers. He admitted that he believed the intention of the Government was to amend the law, and to a certain extent, there would no doubt be an amendment; but he would read to the House a letter that was well deserving of their attention, to show that, under the proposed system, the speculative character of the corn trade would still continue, and that though under the new scale, they might have a more abundant supply of corn, it would still not be had without a derangement of the commerce of the country. The letter he held in his hand was dated the 14th of February, and was addressed by one of the largest houses in the corn trade at Rostock. He would beg particularly to call the attention of the First Lord of the Treasury to this letter:—

"Our trade is nearly suspended, as we are now awaiting the accounts and particulars of the new Corn-law, which Sir Robert Peel will have proposed on the 5th instant, and which we shall most likely receive next Thursday. Until this highly important matter is settled, one way or another, we cannot expect any revival in the trade, as people won't like to invest their money in a business by which they must be afraid that they will be foiled in their operations, or legislative measures; as to us, we do not wish any alteration at all, as your present law, and the great chances for profit the same offers to monied men if they can but hold, is the best we can desire for our trade. We have no doubt, that if the corn business should be brought more on a stationary basis by a fixed or not much varying duty, a great deal of the capital that is now annually invested in the same will be entirely withdrawn. We wish that your Duke of Buckingham may succeed in his opposition, as we are perfectly satisfied that an importation of wheat is wanted in Great Britain this season, and that under the old law your ports must open again at 1*s.* duty, so that a minimum of 5*s.* or more, is but drawing the difference out of the pockets of the holders of stocks. We think all speculators in foreign corn, ought to support your landed interest, as they style themselves."

He had always advocated a fixed duty in preference to a sliding scale, because, a fixed duty was, in point of fact, levied upon the foreign producers, and the higher the prices of corn were in England, the more easily would the fixed duty be paid. He had heard with much gratification, the concessions that had already been made. It was no small concession, when they found the most sturdy opponents to all alteration in the Corn-laws coming forward with even such a modification as was now proposed, and the agricultural interest alarmed, indeed, but still submitting to necessity. What was the language used by the agricultural committee in 1833? That committee, in their report, (p. 13) aid:—

"The political considerations which weighed with the committee of 1821 remain unchanged: and if it be not prudent to run the risk of rendering the dense population of these islands in a great degree dependent on the supply of bread corn from abroad, the protection now given to corn, the growth of the United Kingdom, may be justly regarded as an insurance against famine, and against the danger of that reliance on foreign countries for the staff of life which might be found inconsistent with the safety and permanent interests of the people, and ultimately fatal to our national independence. Your committee has endeavoured to trace the injurious effects of past legislation; and to prove the caution necessary in future measures, it may be urged that they have stated many evils, but have failed to suggest remedies. It should, however, be remembered, that legislative measures, once taken and long established, can rarely be abandoned without danger, and that to retreat is occasionally more dangerous than to advance."

The sentiments contained in that report were now repudiated by almost all parties. He was entitled to say that a great change in opinion had taken place, and though the sentiments contained in the report might be cheered by the hon. Member for Essex, the change in opinion had not the less been effected. He remembered when last year it was insinuated on his side of the House that the right hon. Baronet would alter the laws regulating the importation of foreign corn, the Earl of Darlington declared that he did not believe the agricultural interest would submit to any alteration of the pivot, or to any alteration of the scale. But was it not certain, nevertheless, that an approximation to more liberal opinions had since occurred, and that being the case, might they not hope that the opinions to be proffered to-morrow might approximate still more to their own? He was not going into details of the distress that existed in the country, but when the right hon. Baronet ascribed as the causes of that distress the war with China, the alarm of war in Europe, over-production, joint-stock banks, and machinery, and avowed that he did not bring forward his proposal to mitigate that distress, he (Mr. Hawes) was bound to express his surprise that while the right hon. Baronet went into all the causes of the distress he mentioned three out of four over which no control could be exercised, and brought forward no remedy for that which was obviously under control, namely, the joint-stocks bank issues. He certainly thought that one who had been the colleague of Mr. Huskisson might have been expected to say at least that the only security against these disturbances in our mercantile affairs was to put the trade of the country on as free a basis as possible, so that if checked in one direction it might expand in another, and when disturbed in one part of the globe, it might regain its elasticity in another. Quotations had been made from the circulars of brokers, but he had on his side authority quite as good as that of Messrs. Kingsford and Ley, and if numerical strength were to be taken into consideration, he had the authority of some thirty or forty brokers in opposition to the one that had been quoted on the other side. He held in his hand a circular, dated December, 1841, from the brokers of Liverpool; and he need not remind hon. Members that the end of 1841 was not a season of commercial prosperity. In that circular they said—

"To these causes may be added the financial embarrassments of the United States, the interruption of the China trade, and the long train of evils consequent upon a succession of insufficient harvests. In an association like this, composed of minds of every shade of sentiment, much diversity of opinion must exist upon this most difficult of subjects. By some, the evils, though admitted, are regarded only as of a temporary nature, which so soon as these alleged causes are removed, will, it is thought, disappear, and the manufacturing body at once be restored to a healthy state. Whilst all would gladly concur in views so congenial to their interests and their wishes, there are others who conceive the mischief to be of deeper growth—that it is the offspring of a narrow and exclusive policy, adopted under circumstances widely differing from the present, which, in the vain attempt to enjoy trade without reciprocity, has at last converted valuable customers into successful rivals. To impose restrictions, they contend, on the importation of an article of the first necessity, like grain, instead of fostering and encouraging it, is an anomaly in commercial legislation, wholly unworthy of an age whose boast it is to have carried social improvements to their highest pitch. They derive consolation, however, from the reflection that its reign is drawing to a close—that an admission of the necessity for a change has been extorted from the most unwilling; and, whether the machinery be fixed or sliding, they feel satisfied that no system will long be tolerated which shall limit the consumption of the cheap corn of the continent in this country to seasons of dearth and scarcity. The ties being thus loosed by which the minor and perhaps less defensible monopolies have been upheld, a mass of fiscal absurdities will be swept away, when, unless the work of regeneration have been too long delayed, they look to our manufactures resuming their wanted activity, and after awhile regaining their lost ascendancy."

He believed that the right hon. Gentleman, the Vice-President of the Board of Trade, had complained of the exaggeration that had been put forth relative to the operation of the Corn-laws. But he could find authorities, some of the highest and most entitled to respect, who had spoken of the Corn-laws in terms much more severe than any language that had been recently used—terms that he presumed the right hon. Gentleman also would deem exaggerated. He would not weary the House by quotations, but would content himself with referring them to passages contained in the Report upon the Hand-loom Weavers. That report had been drawn up by Mr. Senior and Mr. Jones Loyd, gentlemen not to be accused, he apprehended, of a tendency to exaggerate, or of a desire to create unnecessary discontent; and yet he knew of no men who had spoken in stronger terms against the Corn-laws, than they had in their character of commissioners. The language they employed in their report described energetically the mischievous operation of those laws upon trade and wages, and still more powerfully the operation of them upon the labouring classes. In a word, the words of that report were as strong and emphatic as those used by any speaker, even at a public meeting. The right hon. Gentleman had said, he wished to keep the price of corn varying from 54*s.* to 58*s.*, the probable average being 56*s.* He (Mr. Hawes) wished to know upon what ground the right hon. Baronet had founded his principle? Was there no evidence to show that corn could be grown cheaper? Upon what principle was it, that the Prime Minister had expressed his hope that corn would range between the prices he had named? It would appear that the natural wish would have been, that corn should be at as low a price as possible. The attempt to regulate the price of corn between two given points had, in fact, been repudiated by past Legislatures. Now, in 1815, the price of corn was 90*s.*, and he had a right to ask, what reliance was to be placed upon the opinions of gentlemen who had entertained such different ideas in that year, as to the amount of protection necessary for the farmer, to those they now came forward and avowed—a difference, in the course of twenty-five years, of from 90*s.* to 56*s.*? There was no more valid reason for supposing 56*s.* a necessary price to be kept up than there was, that 90*s.* ought to be maintained. He had evidence before him, that was given before that very committee, of which the right hon. Gentleman opposite was a Member, to show that corn could be grown under 50*s.*, and he had, therefore, a right to ask the right hon. Baronet to show some better reason, why he had fixed the price at 56*s.* Mr. John Brickwell said, before that committee, that he considered 56*s.* a fair remunerating price in Buckinghamshire, and Mr. Ellis expressed the opinion, that expenses should be brought down until corn could be grown at 50*s.* And when he came to the Scotch agriculturists, what was the evidence of Mr. M'Dougal? That gentleman was asked the following question:—

"What is the lowest price per bushel at which wheat could be generally grown in

Scotland, with a fair rent and a remuneration, on land of the quality of which you are now speaking (Roxburghshire)?—From 6*s.* 6*d* .to 7*s.* a bushel; I do not think we should have any difficulty with the economical mode we are now adopting to be paid at that price.

"Could present rents, in that part of Scotland, of which you are speaking, be maintained at the price of 6*s.* a bushel?—I am perfectly certain they could, taking the fiars prices at the time as a criterion, for it is 10*s.* a boll, or nearly a boll, above the fiars prices, which this year was about 4*s.* 8*d.* a bushel."

Such was the opinion of an intelligent and economical farmer, as to a remunerating price, but when they came to the evidence of the agents of large property, who spoke from knowledge of farmers and farming in general, he found a strong confirmation of his opinion, that the right hon. Gentleman had no right to assume 56*s.* as a remunerating price to the British farmer; if it was not a remunerating price, the right hon. Gentleman was bound to alter his scale in consistency with those who maintained, and he thought successfully, that the corn could be grown at a much less rate. Similar evidence had been adduced before every agricultural committee, and precisely the same evidence had been adduced in 1815, to justify the price of corn at 90*s.*, in 1815, as was now put forward to maintain it at 56*s.* Mr. Fyson was asked:—

"Looking at Mr. Coke's estate in Norfolk, could any number of his tenantry afford to give him any rent whatever with wheat at 5*s.* a bushel?—Yes; I think with a good crop they could.

"Do you think, taking the average of years, that Mr. Coke has a single tenant upon his estate that could afford to give him any rent at 5*s.* a bushel?—Yes, some rent; not the rent now paid.

"Would you say, that any material portion of his estate is such, that the tenant could afford to pay any rent whatever with the wheat at 5*s.* a bushel?—I am not, perhaps, sufficiently acquainted with the soil to answer; but, looking to the great improvements in agriculture, and to the advantage that will be derived from the Poor-laws, the farmer will grow his wheat cheaper.

"What system of Corn-laws, would you substitute which would afford a protection to the farmer from the effects of foreign competition?—I should be for a fixed duty, beginning with a high duty, and going down annually a 1*s.* a quarter, and I should be disposed to go down as low as 5*s.* a quarter, on wheat ultimately.

"Do you think the farmers, with a protection of 5*s.* a quarter on wheat, ultimately could grow wheat in competition with the growers of corn on the continent?—Yes, with the increased intelligence that is going abroad."

He was then asked the freight on foreign wheat, which the witness states at 4*s.*, and on being asked if the duty and freight, viz., 9*s.*, would be enough protection, he says, that it would keep wheat up to 40*s.*, and on being asked,

"Do you think it would be possible with wheat at 40*s.* a quarter, for farmers to grow wheat to any extent?" He answered "Yes, I do. I know (he adds) farmers, young enterprising skilful men, who say, they can grow wheat at 40*s.* a quarter, and who are doing very well now, having a part of their crop at 40*s.* a quarter."

Now, it was not for him to attach an undue value to the evidence he had quoted, but he begged the House to observe, that the witness adhered to his statement under a severe cross-examination. If what that witness said was true, the foundation of the right hon. Baronet's principle, that 56*s.* was the price that ought to be maintained, was obviously erroneous. But he (Mr. Hawes) should be able to show, that the effect of the right hon. Baronet's plan would be to keep the price of corn much higher than 56*s.* He would first quote from the evidence of Mr. Bennett, steward to the Duke of Bedford. That gentleman was asked,—

"At what price do you estimate wheat for the next seven years? If I was going to take a farm for myself, I should not expect, nor should I calculate for the next seven years, to have wheat above 5*s.* or 6*s.* a bushel."

Now, he thought that the evidence he had quoted, justified him in saying, that the Government were not entitled to propose a measure which attempted to regulate the price of corn at from 54*s.* to 58*s.*, and to fix the remunerating price to the farmer at no less than 56*s.* Taking the price of wheat, for a long series of years, abroad, and the duty the right hon. Gentleman had attached to the price of 56*s.*. the result would be, that protection was given practically at a much higher price, The right hon. Gentleman opposite dealt with his own Parliamentary returns rather unfairly, because the consular returns, taking a long series of years, and Mr. Meek's report, all concurred in showing, that foreign corn could not be obtained for a series of years at a less price than 40*s.* He was prepared to show, that 40*s.* was a low estimate. The right hon. Gentleman opposite, in order to lower the apparent price, had struck out certain prices when he was quoting those returns, and he also had omitted to quote the freight at certain ports from which, as he alleged, very little wheat came. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman would permit him to call his attention to the authority of Mr. Jacobs, one of those gentlemen who had been officially employed to collect information. Mr. Jacobs said, that wheat could not be had at Warsaw for less than 28*s.*, and the cost of the transit to London would be 20*s.*, making the price 48*s.*, to which must be added 16*s.* for duty, making the total of 64*s.* Therefore, the wheat bought in Warsaw at the price stated by Mr. Jacobs, could not be bought in the London market at or near 56*s.* He next came to the consular returns, for Mr. Jacobs' inquiries had preceded those, and he found that they stated the price of wheat at Warsaw to be 24*s.*, charges to London 20*s.*, making a total of 44*s.*, to which must be added 16*s.* duty, amounting in the whole to the market price of 60*s.* in London. He believed that calculation to be correct, but he would refer to a more extended inquiry into the subject. In the papers laid before the House of Lords, previous to 1827, it would be found, that the average price of wheat at Dantzic for forty-nine years,—namely, from 1770 to 1819, was stated at 45*s.* 4*d.*, the freight 3*s.* 6*d.*, making 48*s.* 10*d.*, to which add 16*s.* duty, amounting in the whole to 65*s.* That confirmed what he had said, that Polish and Russian wheat would be excluded by the Government proposal from competition with British, and that the protective price would be much higher than 56*s.*, as stated by the right hon. Baronet. This was justly a disappointment to the English people—that a measure should be introduced by the Government, professing to fix the price at 56*s.*, while it practically fixed it at a much higher figure. He would now take an average of succeeding years ending with 1831, and including the years 1823, 1824, 1825, and 1826, when there was no demand from England, and a consequent depression; and he found the average price of wheat at Dantzic was 34*s.* Make the average between that price, and the price for the series of years before,—namely, 45*s.* 4*d.*, and they would find the average between the two was 39*s.* 8*d.*, to which add 8*s.* charges to London, and 16*s.* for duty, and the result would be 63*s.* 8*d.* He again contended, the right hon. Baronet had no right to profess his protecting price to be 56*s.*, and in reality to fix it much higher. The right hon. Secretary for the Home Department had said, that a fixed duty was impossible, but if it could be shown, that a fixed duty was possible, he trusted the right hon. Gentleman would give up his complicated and odious sliding scale, and become a convert to the fixed duty principle. When the right hon. Gentleman quoted the opinion of Mr. Hubbard, he did not make his quotation with that fairness and accuracy which generally characterised him. There was a most material passage which the right hon. Gentleman had not read—a sentence that was comprised within the very passage he selected for extract, and upon which the whole of Mr. Hubbard's reasoning was grounded. He would not say whether the omission was accidental, or whether the right hon. Gentleman had some particular reason for its suppression. Mr. Hubbard said,—

> "To establish a fixed duty, with its reduction made contingent upon the averages reaching a certain price, or even to allow the expectation of such a reduction as an act of the Ministry, would be to foster the grasping spirit which would then hold out for that price, as surely as it has hitherto held for the crowning price of 73*s.* In the present year, even Sir Robert Peel's hypothesis might have been realised; and had an 8*s.* duty been decreed in May last, the price might have risen to 90*s.* in September or October. But why would it have risen?"

Here followed the passage omitted by the right hon. Baronet:—

> "Not because in July and August there was not an abundance of foreign corn in our warehouses; not because it could not be profitably sold at the prices then existing; but because, relying on the opinion which Sir Robert Peel has again and again expressed, 'That when prices rose, a fixed duty could not be maintained,' the holders would have driven up the price by keeping back their corn (they would have created the scarcity by which they were to profit), and when an 'order in council' had kindly remitted them the duty, they would have exacted the utmost which the people would give rather than starve."

Why should not a fixed duty be paid? In every other commodity the merchant paid his duty, and realised his profits. But while the graduated scale continued, the trader relied upon it, and the trade became speculative rather than purely mercantile. He thought the higher the price of corn the more easily would the fixed duty be paid. Why was the sliding scale to be maintained? What was the object? Did the Government intend to maintain a price? If so, he was entitled to refer to the sentiments expressed by the Prime Minister when he introduced his plan, and in the same breath in which he declared that its essential object was to regulate the price, he admitted that the Legislature had no means whatever of maintaining the price. He had no doubt that, to a certain extent, trade in corn would improve, but he saw no reason to believe prices would be steady, or that more corn would be imported, or that trade in general would be benefited. All the essential evil characteristics of the trade in corn would remain uncured and uneradicated. He believed the result of the proposed measure would be found to be, that too much corn would come in at 60*s.* or 64*s.* to satisfy certain country gentlemen, and too little would come in to satisfy the just demands of the trading interest; and he believed that both parties would ere long concur in abrogating it. The right hon. the Vice-President of the Board of Trade, in answering the noble Lord the Member for London, had relied upon the fluctuations of Rye in Poland, but he (Mr. Hawes) confessed he was not struck by the relevancy of the argument. The prices of rye did fluctuate from causes which were very intelligible and susceptible of explanation. Rye was the main food of the people of that country—a country without roads, or proper means of communication, without capital, without merchants, and without stores. Under these circumstances, the price of rye varied in different districts—in one department it might be very high, while in another it might be very low, at one and the same time. He had consulted some of the foreign returns, and soon found the simple solution of the fluctuation in rye, which the right hon. Gentleman had quoted to convince the people of this country that they ought to be satisfied with the fluctuations in the price of corn. It was as follows:—

> "The crops this season have been got in in excellent condition, but in the most productive provinces the spring corn especially has been generally light, and partially a complete failure. The prices of wheat, oats, and buckwheat are consequently high; but rye, the bread-stuff of the great mass of the population, has been a good crop, and the prices are generally not more than double those of abundant years, and in some parts of the country considerably less, with the probability of a further decline when the winter communications are established. Last winter, in some districts, the prices rose to four or five, and even six times the average rates."

Last winter, in the same districts, the prices rose considerably in consequence of a scarcity in the adjoining departments. Now the price of wheat in this country ought to be more steady than in any other part of the world in consequence of the great facility of communication, and the vast amount of capital. The case of Poland was precisely the reverse, and ought not to have been quoted at all. He was acquainted with a gentleman connected with the Polish trade, who had informed him that the lowest price for rye in the provincial markets of Poland during the last fifteen years had been 5 florins per korzec, of which two and a half equal one imperial quarter, or 6*s.* 3*d.* per quarter. In ordinary times, when there was no demand for exportation, the price was about 8 florins per korzec, or 10*s.* per imperial quarter in the interior. In May, 1840, the price of rye at Warsaw was about 12 florins per korzec, or 15*s.* per quarter; and in December, in consequence of a demand for Russia, the price had risen to 22 florins per korzec, or 27*s.* 6*d.* per imperial quarter, and so great was the scarcity that the steam mill was continually forced to stop for want of supplies. When the right hon. Gentleman referred to the period from 1765 to 1815 as a period of free trade in corn—as a period to which all the friends of free trade referred with triumph, as a proof that nothing interfered with the price of corn except the ordinary influence of supply and demand, he was astonished. Mr. Tooke, in his work on Prices, says,

> "There is no experience of an unrestricted corn trade in the last two centuries to admit of comparison between the recent fluctuations—none in any former equal period—and thus to form grounds of inference as to what would, under circumstances in other respects similar, have been the fluctuations in a perfectly unrestricted state of trade. But, both from analogy, and from a reference to the working of the law, it is perfectly clear that the fluctuations could not have been greater, would most probably have been on a smaller scale, and would most certainly not have been attended with

such disturbance in the direction of commercial capital and credit."

With regard to the averages, he had seen some incredulity manifested on the other side, when it was stated on that (the Opposition) side of the House, that the proposition of the Government would cause an alteration of 5*s.* in the averages. He was prepared to maintain that a difference of at least 5*s.* a quarter would be made in the averages by the addition of the 156 towns to the 150 from which the averages were now taken, and by the adoption of a more stringent mode of taking them. His right hon. Friend the late President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Labouchere) had referred to a return before the House, which showed distinctly and positively the actual weekly difference between the average of the London market and the average of many of the towns from which the returns were now received. His right hon. Friend had shown distinctly, and beyond the reach of controversy or dispute, that there was an actual difference of about 4*s.* a quarter. But though this was conclusive upon the point, it was not all that he relied upon. If hon. Gentlemen would refer to the average prices of the large towns, exclusive of London, and compare them with the average prices of smaller towns, they would constantly find a variation between the average prices of the two classes of towns of from 3*s.* to 5*s.* a quarter. Under the existing act about 150 towns furnished the returns upon which the average price was struck. Take three, or five, or seven of the principal of those towns—say London, Wakefield, Leeds, Derby, Liverpool, Newcastle, and Hull, and it would be found that the average price of wheat, as applied to them, amounted on the 1st of September, 1841, to 75*s.* a quarter. In the remaining towns from which the returns were furnished, the average price at that time was 67*s.* 2*d*, giving a general average for the whole kingdom of 71*s.* 2*d.* What he meant to prove from this was, that if the averages from country districts and the large towns were excluded, there would at all times be found to exist a very material difference in the averages; in short, that the averages would be considerably reduced. Why was it that the large towns furnished the highest averages? Because in all the large towns there was a much larger market, and a much greater consumption of the best kind of flour. This naturally and necessarily had the effect of raising the averages; and under the present bill its operation was most beneficent, because, by raising the averages, it lessened the duty at which foreign corn could be admitted. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Kent (Sir Edward Knatchbull) stated the other night that the House ought to consider the burdens and disqualifications to which the land was subject. He was not unwilling to consider any burdens or disqualifications imposed exclusively upon the land; but he thought it would be an exceedingly difficult task to the Gentlemen opposite to prove what those exclusive burdens and disqualifications were. If, however, they could make out that the land really was exclusively and unjustly taxed, then he was ready to concur with his hon. Friend the Member for Bath (Mr. Roebuck), and to remedy the loss sustained by the land, either by direct compensation, or by maintaining a fixed duty on the importation of foreign corn. When the right hon. Baronet talked of the disqualification of the land, he confessed that he did not very distinctly understand the right hon. Baronet. He presumed, however, that the right hon. Baronet meant that the English agriculturist could not grow beetroot and tobacco. But if the English agriculturist had the power or the privilege of growing tobacco, would not the right hon. Baronet's next step be to come down to Parliament and ask for protection against the importation of tobacco from America? In the same way would not the right hon. Baronet equally demand protection if the soil of England were capable of growing cotton? If these were the only disqualifications of the land, it was clear that that interest was no worse off than any other interest in the country under the operation of the Excise-laws. All the interests that came under the operation of those laws would have just as good a claim to compensation, or to have taxes imposed in their favour, as the land had in consequence of the disqualifications to which he had just adverted. There was one other point to which he was anxious to direct the attention of the House. [" *Question.*"] He was aware that he had detained the House at some length; but when at that hour he was interrupted by the cry of "question," he must be permitted to say that it was not quite fair to attribute to those who sat on the Opposition side of the House the prolongation of the debate. Might he be allowed to remark, on that the fourth night of the debate, that up to that moment there had not been one single Gentleman connected with her Majesty's Government who had condescended to address the House in reply to the able, moderate, and temperate speech in which his hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Villiers) had introduced the subject to the attention of the Legislature. If that were thought to be a courteous or a politic mode of meeting a question so deeply interesting to the people of England, he could only say that he thought the Gentlemen opposite would find themselves much mistaken in their opinion. He thought that they (the Opposition) had, on their part, a perfect right to prolong the debate, if they thought fit, until they had extracted from a Member of the Cabinet some answer to or some notice of the admirable speech of his hon. Friend (Mr. Villiers). Whilst no Member of the Government rose, he thought the Opposition might fairly regard the silence of the Ministerial bench as a general intimation that they (the Opposition) were to go on speaking until it should be convenient to any of the Members of the Cabinet to come forward. There never was a period in the history of this country when the depression of the mercantile interest was so universal, and the amount of its losses so great, as at the present moment. Those who were engaged in it attributed this depression to the influence of that exclusive policy which prohibited the importation of many of the great articles of commerce. He understood that it was the intention of the right hon. Baronet (Sir Robert Peel) to announce to the House the alterations he intended to make in the tariff of this country. In that respect the right hon. Baronet would copy the intention of the late Government. To him, however, it mattered not from whom the alterations came. Although he might not be disposed to pay much respect to the course of policy which last year induced the present Government to oppose or suspend the operation of measures which they were now obliged to confess would be beneficial and useful—although he might not be disposed to approve of the policy which induced the right hon. Baronet and his Colleagues to obstruct the introduction of wise and prudent measures until they should have the opportunity of proposing them themselves; yet, come from whence they would, he should receive them gratefully, and so he believed would the great bulk of the people. It remained to be seen whether a Government so entirely adopting the policy of its predecessors was one that would obtain the confidence and support of the people.

Mr. *Mark Philips* promised not to detain the House at any length; but he felt it to be his duty to attempt, in however feeble a manner, to represent the views and feelings of the great constituency which sent him there upon the important question then under discussion. He could not forget that when he had the honour of moving the Address to her Majesty, at the commencement of the last Session of Parliament, the statement which he then felt called upon to make with reference to the distresses of the people appeared to be doubted by many who heard him, and to be called in question generally by the Gentlemen who sat on the opposite side of the House. He was bound to say, however, that it had since been admitted that the statement of distress which he then made was not in any degree overcharged. The Seconder of the Address in the present Session admitted that, although the hon. Members had last year doubted that the distress was so deep, the hon. Members had since found that it was fully as great as he had described it to be. He remembered that, on the 7th of June last, when it was proposed that an appeal should be made to the people, and that a new Parliament should be assembled, the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) exhorted the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell), at that time the leader of the Government in that House, to render the interval that should elapse between the dissolution of the one Parliament and the assembling of the next as short as possible, for the purpose, amongst other things, of taking into consideration the important question which the House was now called upon to discuss. But when the new Parliament assembled, it appeared to him that there was a great diminution of zeal on the part of the right hon. Baronet and his friends to take it into immediate consideration, and the country, notwithstanding the extent and depth of its distress, had been kept waiting until it at length suited the convenience of the right hon. Baronet to come forward with the proposition which he had recently submitted to the House. Now he must say that, to his constituents at least, the proposition of the right hon. Baronet conveyed no hope of any improvement. They had been deeply disappointed, and he regreted to say that the consequence had been that many of those whom he had heretofore ranked amongst his own particular friends and supporters had joined themselves with those who saw no remedy for the evils of the country but in an extension of the suffrage to every individual who should have attained the age of twenty-one years. He was bound to state, in candour both to them and to the House, that in that movement he could not join. In making that declaration he was perfectly aware that he might be placing himself in an attitude of hostility to the views and feelings of a great number of those for whom he entertained the highest possible respect. Still he felt that it was his duty to make it. The movement to which he had adverted showed that there was in the minds of the people of this country, many of whom were plunged into the depths of the deepest suffering, a feeling of great and bitter disappointment at the proposition that had been made, and he regreted that they should be told there was no power in the present Government to relieve the distress which was rapidly spreading itself in every direction. The right hon. Baronet (Sir Robert Peel) had told the House that he did not consider the distress in which the country was plunged as arising in any material degree out of the operation of the Corn-laws; and he added, that he did not consider it in his power to remedy, to any great extent, the depression of trade, or severity of suffering, to which the country was exposed. If so, he did not wonder at the disappointment which had been expressed. When the people saw a Government which did propose measures which, in his estimation, would have been satisfactory and beneficial to the country, turned out of office, and succeeded by another Government, which declared that it could hold out no hope or prospect of remedying the evils which were admitted to exist—when the people saw this, he did not wonder that they should be filled with feelings of deep disappointment. It had been said that the working classes did not agree with the Members of that House who were advocates for the immediate repeal of the Corn-laws. Within the last fortnight it had been his lot to present to the House a petition, praying for the total and immediate repeal of those laws, signed by 68,800 of the inhabitants of Manchester. Now the population of Manchester, according to the last census, was 240,000. He thought then, that the House would agree with him, that, dividing the females from the males, and making a sufficient calculation for children and for those under age, a petition signed by 68,800 male adults could be regarded as no mean expression of the opinion of the inhabitants of Manchester with reference to this question. He had also at that moment for transmission to the foot of the Throne a memorial signed by 36,000 of the inhabitants of Manchester, which, after setting forth the grievances of the memorialists, prayed that her Majesty would be graciously pleased to remove her present advisers from the head of affairs. He was anxious that there should be no mistake, either on the part of his constituents or of the House, as to what his feeling was in reference to the proposition of his hon. Friend the member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Villiers). When he had first the honour of addressing those whom he was now proud to call his constituents, ten years ago, he stated that he was opposed to any and every impost upon the importation of food. Considering however the very conflicting views and interests that existed with reference to the Corn-laws, he stated at that time that he was willing and disposed to accept a moderate fixed duty on corn, which should decline year by year, until the trade should be perfectly open and free. Had his views, as then expressed, been carried into effect, the trade in corn would at this moment be free and unrestricted. He had now nothing to retract from the opinion first expressed to his constituents. He thought that the time had come when no duty should be levied on the importation of corn, and he was consequently prepared to vote with his hon. Friend for the total and immediate repeal of the Corn-laws. Looking at the distress that prevailed in every quarter, he felt that it would be only justice to the millions who were suffering if the tax upon food were that night removed. Objectionable as he conceived the proposition of the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) to be, he must still, in candour, admit tha he considered it to be an improvement upon the existing state of things. But he saw in it nothing that would materially improve the condition of the people, or take the corn trade out of the hands of speculators and gamblers, and place it in the hands of the cautious and prudent merchant, who ought to have an opportunity of purchasing corn as readily, and with as much facility, abroad as any other article of commerce. From the nature of the sliding scale, he, as a merchant, had found it utterly impossible ever to attempt to import, in return for goods exported, one single cargo of foreign corn. Under the scale now proposed the same difficulty would exist, because he solemnly believed that the general merchant would have no chance whatever of importing corn against those acute and speculating men who watched the state of the barometer in this country, and gathered information as to the state of the crops abroad, and who, from their position, were better able to take advantage of all the circumstances out of which their profits were to arise. He did not attach much importance, therefore, to the letters and statements which had been offered to the House as coming from individuals engaged in the corn trade, because it was clear that their satisfaction with a scale of duties might arise at a point far earlier than any satisfaction could arise in the mind of the ordinary merchant, and certainly long before it could arise in the minds of the great body of consumers. What would become of the trade of this ountry, what would our merchants do, what would be the condition of our manufacturers and operatives, supposing that the United States, adopting the plan which we pursued with reference to the staple article of human food, were to place a sliding scale of duties upon every article of manufacture, industry, and skill, imported from this country? Where would be the merchant so reckless, so daring, so speculative, as to run the risk of sacrificing his fortune by making shipments of goods, when he could not have the slightest indication beforehand of what the duty might be which he would have to pay when his venture reached the other side of the Atlantic? Why the article of corn—the great staple of food upon which the people of this country depended—was to be made subject to the operation of a sliding-scale, when the principle of a sliding-scale was not applied to our commercial code generally, he, for one, was at a total loss to comprehend. The people looked upon it as a piece of selfish legislation, and they were perfectly justified in looking at it in that light. They asked who framed these laws—and, prosecuting their inquiry, they found that they were framed and passed by a Legislature in which the landed interest was predominant; and although he could not himself suppose that the landed interest of that time could have seen the evils to which they exposed their fellow-countrymen, yet it was impossible to say that there was not class legislation and a feeling of selfishness in those laws as they now operated upon the general interest of the country. He perfectly admitted, with those who had said in the course of the debate, that the landed interest having a preponderance in the Legislature, had only done for themselves what any other interest, having an equal predominance, might undoubtedly have done for themselves also. But the people considered these laws to be selfish and partial, and earnestly entreated the House now to legislate in the right direction, and to give them the power of exchanging the produce of their labour for the produce of other countries. Since the commencement of the last Session of Parliament he had felt it to be his duty to investigate in his own person the condition of his distressed fellow-creatures in the township in which he resided. It was a township in which the population was principally employed in the occupation of hand-loom weaving; and he must confess that the destitution of those people was beyond any thing he could have conceived. Visiting them personally, he had found them with neither bedding, clothing, nor furniture. When he said neither of those things, he meant nothing worthy of the name of either—nothing that any human being in a civilized community could have a right to denominate bedding, clothing, or furniture. What was the condition of those people? Three years of intense suffering they had already gone through. They were workpeople principally employed in the manufacture of fabrics prepared for the United States. The market in that country, as every one knew, had of late been in a very depressed state; and the condition of the workpeople who had almost solely depended upon it was at this moment such, that in the course of his visits amongst them he did not find in any house one single meal prepared, or even so much as one single wheaten loaf. A manufacturer in his neighbourhood had assured him that he considered that 40*l.* for each individual renting a House with a family would scarcely put them in that condition of comfort in which they were about ten years ago; and now, notwithstanding all their industry, they were scarcely able to earn as much as would keep body and soul together, not taking into account their clothing, bedding, or furniture. What expectation could these people entertain of any relief, if the Legislature continued those laws which in their opinion pressed them down day by day to a lower state of human degradation? He thought that he could without much difficulty attribute this depression of a part of their trade to the operation of the Corn-laws, because, if in exchange for the articles which these people manufactured the Legislature would permit them to take the wheat and flour of the United States, he would venture to say that, deep as the distress was at the present moment, the first importation of corn or flour from the United States would give life and activity to their trade, and, consequently, employment to many of those who were now pining out a miserable and wretched existence. In stating this, he was borne out by a fact which had lately occurred. On the 28th December last there was a ray of hope that some improvement was about to take place, which, when he traced it to its source, he found had arisen from a cargo of American flour which the merchants in Liverpool, to whom the owners consigned it, determined to take out of bond; and in consequence they set about purchasing goods for the American market. There was an immediate improvement in the trade, and he thought if they took this single instance as an evidence of what would occur under a more extended trade, there could be no doubt as to the benefits which would accrue to the manufacturing industry of this country; and he thought it would also show, if they placed trade on a solid foundation with those who were anxious to deal with them, that the fears and apprehensions which hon. Gentlemen opposite had expressed as to the condition of the country were perfectly groundless, and that the people of this country would be able to increase their consumption, not only of wheat, but of every other article of agricultural produce necessary to their comfortable existence. He thought that in this discussion they had limited the benefits of the repeal of the Corn-law too much to wheat alone, and that they had not looked to the power which an extended trade would give to the working man of purchasing many other articles of agricultural produce. He must say, that hon Gentlemen opposite appeared to him to have overlooked a most important fact in arguing this question, when they supposed that this country would be flooded by corn from the continent in the event of the repeal of the Corn-laws. They had argued as if the land on the continent could bear a succession of white straw crops, and seemed to forget that the farmers abroad would be obliged to follow the same rotation system as the farmers at home. He knew of no land, in the north of Germany, so fertile as to be capable of bearing a succession of white straw crops, and hon. Gentlemen had conjured up a fear which had no foundation. But he took his stand on the broad ground of justice. The people of this country were being alienated from the Government, from the Legislature, and from their institutions, in consequence of the position in which they found themselves, and which they attributed, in a great degree, to the operation of the Corn-law. Another fatal mistake had been committed by hon. Gentlemen opposite, in supposing that the sliding scale had been the means of supplying this country with foreign wheat in periods of scarcity at home. They said that the sliding scale permitted the importation of corn sufficient for the wants of the country. He took on himself emphatically to deny this. Even at the time when the greatest importation occurred, hundreds of thousands of the people were only half-fed; and even supposing that the sliding scale had permitted a quantity of corn to be imported equal to the deficiency to our parents, still he would say, that it had fallen far short of feeding the hungry and clothing the naked multitude. He was surprised that the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth had, in his opening statement, omitted to notice a most important effect of the Corn-law — he meant the effect which the operation of the sliding scale had on the position and safety of the Bank of England. He contended that so long as the sliding scale existed they would be compelled, in years of scarcity, to part with the bullion of the Bank of England before they could obtain foreign supplies of corn, which might be obtained, under a fixed duty, by the regular exchange of the manufactured goods of this country. The loss of so much bullion was trivial compared with the other evils which attended the operation of such a system. The dealers on the continent were on the watch to know whether the harvest in this country would be an average or a deficient one, and whenever a period of scarcity occurred, the prices in foreign markets were certain to rise, and this country was drained of its gold; and then everything became hazardous—goods fell in value, and stocks of all kinds suffered a depreciation, and the loss which was thus entailed on the community was frightful to contemplate. He would not trouble the House by going into any statement of figures to show the amount of the distress which was thus occasioned, but he thought he was not guilty of exaggeration when he said that the country would, under such a system, be placed in a dangerous state, inasmuch as the necessaries of life would then rise in exact proportion as the means of purchasing them diminished. If the House would permit him, he would read a calculation which had been made as to the condition of the people in different years. It was a statement made by an individual of high respectability—by Mr. Neild, the mayor of Manchester, showing the income and expenditure of twelve of the best paid families and artisans in Manchester, and seven in Dukinfield, in 1836 and in 1841:—

> "The total income of the twelve families in Manchester was the same in the two years, viz., 22*l*. 4*s*. 2*d*. a week. Their weekly household expenditure, in 1836, was 14*l*. 15*s*. 11*d*., leaving a surplus of 7*l*. 8*s*. 3*d*. for education, saving, and the purchase of manufactured articles. In 1841, their weekly expenditure was 17*l*. 9*s*. 8*d*., leaving only 4*l*. 14*s*. 6*d*. for education, saving, and the purchase of manufactured articles. In the former year, food formed 54 per cent. of their expenditure; in the latter, 70 per cent. The total weekly income of the seven families in Dukinfield, was, in 1836, 8*l*. Their household expenditure was 5*l*. 12*s*. 3*d*., leaving a surplus of 2*l*. 7*s*. 9*d*. for education, saving, and clothing. In 1841, their aggregate income was reduced to 5*l*. 6*s*. 8*d*., while their necessary expenditure increased to 6*l*. 8*s*. 1*d*.; leaving not only no surplus for clothing, but a heavy debt instead. In the former year, food formed 46 per cent. of their expenditure; in the latter year, 89 per cent."

This, he thought, was sufficient evidence to show how the price of food had been enhanced to the working man under the operation of the present system. What had been said in reference to the exports of this country, and as to the increase of those exports, as indicating an increasing prosperity? He had no hesitation in repeating what he had been called on to state more than once, that for the last two years he had ceased to consider the exports as any proof of the prosperity of the country. It was an incontrovertible fact, from their not being able to sell their goods in the home markets, the manufacturers had been obliged to send them abroad; and it was by means of the system of advances that the manufacturers had been enabled to carry on their trade and keep their workmen employed. He held a circular in his hand, to the statements in which he thought the House would attach more weight, than they would do to any thing which he could say. It was written by a friend of his own, a large commission merchant in Manchester, and although differing from him in general politics, he perfectly agreed in the statement he was about to read. If the House desired it, he would name his authority. The circular was issued by Messrs. G. Fraser and Co., of Manchester, and they state that

> "The severe losses thus arising have rendered the position of spinners and manufacturers most unsatisfactory; and few are able to work their establishments so as to pay common interest upon the capital invested; whilst others, hoping for speedy amendment, and anxious to continue the working of their mills, are contracting engagements upon their property, which, unless soon relieved by an improvement in trade, must end in their ultimate ruin. The immense loss and depreciation of the property of mill-owners and occupiers, during the last few years, have been such that were it to be immediately converted into capital, it would render many of them insolvent, but who are now held up by the powerful arm of assistance, in the hope that the danger will soon be over. This fact is fully borne out by the immense sacrifices in sales recently made of such property, which in many instances have not fetched their actual cost within 50 to 70 per cent. And it is still further proved by the circumstances, that in Manchester and six of the principal towns in its immediate neighbourhood, there were about two months ago sixty-three mills entirely at a stand from bankruptcies and other causes; and besides these, forty-eight others working only short time. The number of the latter class we believe to be now considerably increased."

They further stated, that "on comparing the actual deliveries of cotton taken for consumption, we notice a diminished amount in the last year, as compared with the preceding, of about 3,200 bags (estimated at 300lbs. each), per week or about 168,000 bags, in the year," and they state, that—

> "The cause of this extraordinary fact must lie, we conceive, in the decreased demand for our home trade, which has been bad this year, and has fallen short of its usual consumption. And this is borne out by the very general complaints of those engaged in this branch of traffic, and by the sacrificing rates at which prints and other goods prepared for home consumption have been forced upon the market. It would, therefore, appear, that the increase in the amount of exports has not arisen so much from an augmented demand from foreign markets as from the difficulty which manufac-

turers have experienced in disposing of their stocks except at ruinously low rates. They have thus been induced to ship their goods to foreign markets, in many cases 'under advance,' in the hope of obtaining better prices than at home. But this mode of doing business has often been equally unfortunate to them, and re-drafts for over-advances are known to have been frequently the result. These consignments have, in almost all cases, consisted of manufactured piece goods, showing that the over-production consists chiefly in that particular part of our manufactures more generally adapted for the home trade."

He believed that that was a fair statement of their foreign trade. The other night the right hon. Baronet, the Secretary for the Home Department, read to the House a statement of Mr. Horner, one of the factory inspectors, in regard to the number of mills built in 1839. He thought that the right hon. Baronet was mistaken, unintentionally of course, in what he then stated. He believed the meaning which his remarks conveyed to the House was, that since 1839 ninety-one mills had been built. That he conceived to be impossible. Those mills may have come into operation in 1839, but they were being built during the years 1836, 1837, and 1838; and that these mills had in part arisen out of a system of false and pernicious credit he was not standing there to deny, but he begged to remind the right hon. Baronet, in reference to this point, that he in the last Session, in the first week after the change of the Administration, applied to him to obtain a return of the number of mills in operation, distinguishing those in full work, and those in short work, together with those that had been closed. The right hon. Baronet refused to order that return, alleging that such a return could only show the past, and not the actual condition of the mills; and he now reminded the right hon. Baronet of this to show that he had been desirous to possess a document of the nature of that which the right hon. Baronet had since obtained himself, and to which he had the other night alluded. The persons employed in these mills amounted to nearly 16,000, and these persons ought to be as much the objects of their care as the labourers in the agricultural districts. In regard to the system of credit given in the year 1835, he had himself deprecated it at the time, and in 1836 he told his constituents that he considered it a dangerous system, but they did not seem sufficiently apprehensive regarding it. But, what were the extenuating circumstances? He confessed that his opinion had undergone some modifications in reference to over-speculation. He had been assured by some large manufacturers that during 1835 and 1836 almost every transaction which they had with other parties—almost every sale of goods they made, had been paid for in Bank of England notes. They could not then be accused of over speculation, and he would like to know if any merchant or if any farmer would have considered it over-speculation had they been paid for their sales in notes of the Bank of England. He knew that many persons did not see the danger, but in dealing with this part of the case they ought not forget that at that very period, when these rapid advances were taking place in this country, similar advances were occurring in the United States. If the power of production in this country appeared at that time to be carried beyond its proper limits, the apparent power of consumption on the part of the United States was also carried beyond its legitimate bounds, and in this way might have arisen that over-production alluded to. They had now arrived at a period when the people were suffering from the diminished power of consumption—the time had arrived when it was admitted that the people must be fed and clothed. He felt bound to say that he believed the people were only anxious to find a market for the produce of their industry—they had no wish to inflict an injury on the landed interest —they wished to see that interest upheld, promoted, and encouraged, but not promoted and encouraged by the sort of legislative protection which it had hitherto enjoyed. What the manufacturers asked for was free trade. He did not stand there to ask for protection to trade or manufactures. There was, perhaps, no individual in the House or in the kingdom who could argue this question with more fairness than he himself could do with reference to his own private possessions, because he believed there was not an individual who, if (protection from manufactures were entirely withdrawn, as he contended it ought to be, provided protection from agriculture were also withdrawn,) was more open to foreign competition with respect to the manufacture with which he was himself connected, than the individual who then addressed them. He had heard with regret from the hon. and learned Member for Bradford some expressions which he thought were unworthy of him, and which he hoped had been used in the warmth of the moment without reflection. The hon.

Member said, that the drum ecclesiastic had been beaten in connection with the Corn-laws of this country. He felt that the hon. Gentleman had gone far to injure himself in the opinion of a large body of those whose estimation he considered it an honour to possess. He hoped the hon. Gentleman would have the kindness to acknowledge that the expression he had used was made hastily, and without any intention to cast a slur upon a highly honourable body, who were conscientiously discharging their duty. He had also to complain of the language of the hon. Member for Pontefract (Mr. Milnes), when speaking of the efforts of the dissenting clergy in reference to this question. The hon. Member said, that "he thanked God the clergy of the Establishment had not degraded themselves by taking part in the agitation against the Corn-laws." If it were a degradation for a clergyman to sympathise with his flock, and if it were a degradation to advocate that which was for the true interests of the people, then the dissenting clergy might be well content to hear the reproach cast upon them. He thought it most injurious to make such remarks. He trusted they were made inadvertently, and were not intended to convey any slight upon individuals, who, in their sacred vocations, and in all the social relations of life would not suffer in comparison with the clergy of the Church of England, for the kindness and consideration evinced for the sufferings of the people. The manufacturers, too, had come in for their share of abuse. All he would say for them was, that they were cast in the same mould with others. He would not deny that there might be found amongst them sordid individuals, as there might be found in other classes of society; but he would ask this question, whether the manufacturers were less distinguished for honour and integrity in their transactions than any other portion of the community; whether they were less regardful of the interests, the welfare, and the comforts of the poorer classes within their influence; whether they supported the charitable institutions of their o-calities with a less beneficient hand than any other class of proprietors? He would ask whether they were in the habit of distinguishing themselves in any way by losing vast hereditary properties upon the mere cast of a die, or the turn of a card, and thus placing in jeopardy all those dependant upon them? He would ask whether among the manufacturers they met with individuals who were spendthrifts, and whose estates were placed in the hands of legal men, by whom the rents of their property, amounting to a large proportion of a whole county, after raising all these rents were received, and when that was done, turned round upon the country and called themselves the farmers' friends? He thought when aspersions were cast upon the manufacturers he had a right to justify them. He did not mean to say that the manufacturers, either in or out of the House were more than mortals; but he had heard with great pain the aspersions cast upon them—aspersions which were utterly unfounded. It was not his wish to cast aspersions upon any body of men. He believed that the country gentlemen were naturally anxious to improve their estates, and he wished to see them carry out that principle by the same means with which the manufacturers were effecting their improvements—by the adoption of the skill and even the application of machinery. It was very gratifying to him to have heard the noble Lord the Member for Newark, and the hon. Member for Canterbury bear testimony to the good character of the manufacturing population. Those two Gentlemen had visited the manufacturing districts, and they appeared to have returned back to the House with a degree of information which they admitted they had not possessed before. The expression of their opinions and sympathies with respect to the manufacturing population would not be forgotten. He would say to other hon. Members—"Go ye, and do likewise. Visit the manufacturing districts; judge for yourselves, whether the people were worthy of your sympathy,—whether they were less intelligent than other men; hold communication with them, hear them tell their simple story, and then say whether your feelings would not be excited to do them justice." On their behalf he expressed his earnest hope that this was not the sole and only measure which the government had to propose for them. If it were, it would indeed be a bitter disappointment to those who had borne privation through a severe winter with exemplary patience. In giving his support to the motion of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, he felt he was doing that which was his duty, perfectly regardless of any consequences to himself as affecting any property he might himself possess. He earnestly conjured the House to grant a measure from their own conviction, and not to wait till it might be extorted from their fears. He used not the word "fear" in the form of a threat. He knew full well that if they did not legislate in a right direction, the landed interest would not be the only interest that would suffer. Every interest in the state would suffer; therefore he would avert the evil from the agricultural interest as well as from himself. His deep and honest conviction was, that the feelings of the people were alienated from the House of Commons—not from any particular class, but from the whole body. He believed he was not guilty of any exaggeration in making this statement. He foresaw that fearful consequences must result were the present course much longer persevered in; evils must inevitably flow from the system now proposed—nay, those evils were threatening them at the very threshold; but it was not even yet too late, by wise legislation, to avert them.

Sir *R. Peel.*—Sir, when I took the opportunity of submitting to the House of Commons the proposal of her Majesty's Government on the subject of the Corn-laws, I felt it my duty to state to the House, that I thought the extent to which the existing Corn-laws had operated to cause or to increase that distress, the existence of which was not denied, had been considerably exaggerated. I thought that other causes had been in operation which might be referred to, as accounting in a considerble degree for that distress. One of those causes I then stated to be, that there had been an undue stimulus given to commercial and manufacturing enterprise, in consequence of the aid afforded by the joint-stock banks to merchants and others acting in conjunction with those joint-stock banks. For these statements I have been called to account by several hon. Members. I have been told, that this doctrine of over-production and undue speculation was perfectly ridiculous, and it consequently is with some satisfaction that I hear from the hon. Gentleman whose attention has been especially called to this part of the subject, and who represents the borough of Manchester—the great seat of the cotton manufacture—statements confirming, in the fullest extent, the statements I then made, and admitting that by means of that undue and unnatural excitement which was given in the way I described to commercial speculation a great portion of that distress had been brought about. In this the hon. Gentleman implicates his constituents. It may be also that there was an overissue of bank notes, and other causes of distress, in operation; but I only referred to these causes in order to justify myself in not holding the sentiments of those who were looking despondingly at a situation of the country which I considered to be peculiar, and partly to be attributed to other causes, by taking proper precautions against which such causes might be prevented from occurring again. In that, I am altogether confirmed by the experience and practical knowledge of the hon. Gentleman. I said, also that, with respect to the diminution in the amount of our exports to the United States of North America, the derangement which had taken place in the monetary system of the United States might have had some operation. There also I have the hon. Gentleman's sanction. He most justly said that, however our own monetary system had been deranged, the same cause had operated to a greater extent in the United States, and that such monetary derangement in the United States must necessarily have operated injuriously to our own manufacturing interests. In 1839, the declared value—not the official value—of our exports to the United States of the chief articles of manufacture, such as woollen, linen, cotton, and silk goods, hardware, and other British and Irish goods, amounted to 7,585,000*l.*; in 1840, they were 8,839,000*l.*; and in 1841, they fell to 5,200,000*l.* That has no doubt been compensated by an increase in other articles; but still those houses which are concerned in the American trade, must have suffered by this sudden and extraordinary depression, and it must be difficult, although the whole amount of exports may not be diminished, to prevent great, partial, and individual distress on account of the interruption of such a market. I stated also in that speech, that the disturbance of our amicable relations with China might be considered as another cause of the distress. The hon. Gentlemen the Member for Paisley, differed from me on that point. He said, that the total amount of our exports to China had increased, although the amount of our direct exports had considerably decreased. The hon. Member said, that that diminution in our direct exports to China, had possibly led to my over-rating the effect of the disturbance of our relations with that country on our trade. It is my anxious wish not to over-rate it. Our direct exports to China during the three years, already referred to exhibit a considerable diminution. In the year 1839, our direct exports to China amounted to 1,204,000*l.*; in 1840, they fell to 851,000*l.*; and in 1841, they still further fell to 524,000*l.*, that is to say, at the same time that the great diminution took place in our exports to the United States. But the hon. Gentleman, the Member for Paisley, said, that although the document to which I referred showed a great diminution in the direct exports, yet there was still a considerable indirect export into China, and by that means an increase upon our whole imports. I think he mentioned particularly our exports to Singapore. The hon. Member I understood to say, that our exports to the East-Indies had generally increased, but he particularly referred to those to Singapore. Now, I will take the exports to Singapore and China together. In 1839, the amount of our exports to Singapore and China together was 1,582,000*l.* In 1841, they were 1,311,000*l.* Then, even taking the exports of the two together, there appears a considerable decrease. Our direct exports have considerably decreased, and although the exports to Singapore present a considerable increase, and granting that a considerable portion of those increased exports found their way into China, still, although I may rather have overstated the diminution in our exports to China, I think the hon. Member is hardly correct in saying that, coupling the indirect with the direct exports, there had been a considerable increase. I speak with great respect for the authority of the hon. Member, and if I have overstated the diminution in the exports to China, I can only assure him that that over-statement has been unintentional. I at the same time professed an opinion which I know was unpalatable to those who heard it, but which a sense of duty compelled me to offer. I stated, that I thought the prejudicial effect of the Corn-laws upon the manufactures of this country had been considerably overrated. Sir, finding that this question has been spoken to by hon. Gentlemen, speaking with very high authority upon the subject, I have reconsidered that opinion. I can assure the House that no man entertains a higher sense than I do of the value of manufactures. It would be ungrateful in me, and most unwise, were I to undervalue the importance of the cotton manufactures to the best interests of the country. When I sat on the other side of the House, I often stated an opinion to the same effect. I always expressed my sense of the importance of manufactures to agricultural prosperity. I have always maintained the opinion, and I repeat it now, that the prosperity of manufactures in this country is of more importance to the interests of agriculture than any system of Corn-laws whatever; and therefore, in proposing, as a Minister of the Crown, an alteration in the Corn-laws, when I stated that opinion, I did not do so for the first time. But I look to documents furnished by eminent and enlightened men as to the progress of the cotton manufacture, and I see in those documents, from which others draw conclusions opposed to mine, a strong confirmation of my opinion, that the prejudicial effect of the operation of the Corn-laws upon cotton manufactures has been very much over-rated. Sir, we certainly used to be told, that the effect of the Corn-laws, by raising the price of food in this country, was to disable us from entering into competition with other manufacturing countries. Surely, the argument when exports were diminished was, "See the prejudicial effect of the Corn-laws! The exports of manufactured goods have considerably diminished, and the cause of it is the greater cheapness of food in the competing countries, and our inability to enter into competition with our rivals." That surely used to be the argument in former times; but now that the hon. Gentleman who represents that great manufacturing interest, finds the exports have increased, he turns round with a philosophy which, I confess, somewhat surprised me, and says, his opinion has undergone a complete change, for that he now finds the increased exports of cotton manufactured goods have only led to greater failure and distress. [Mr. *M. Phillips:* Within the last two years.] But although the profits of the manufacturers may have diminished — [Mr. *M. Philips:* There have been none at all.] But how does that show the danger of foreign competition from the lower price of food in the competing countries? You say, "True, we can now manufacture goods so cheaply, that we are enabled to export larger quantities, but you must not consider that as an indication of manufacturing prosperity." Granted: that increased export may not necessarily be a test of corresponding prosperity; but it is at least a decisive proof that the price of food in this country has not prevented you from overpowering the competition of other countries; because, notwithstanding the price of corn in this country, you have been enabled to undersell all your foreign competitors. [*"No, no!"*] But you have been enabled to increase your exports. I have been present at debates in this House during the last thirty years, and I have never heard but one story—"True, the exports have increased, but no one has gained anything by it." It is in vain to adduce proof that within the last two years ninety fresh mills have been set in operation. I will concede that if they were old mills you might reply that you kept them in work because it was better to continue than to discontinue the machinery; but how do you reconcile this declared loss to the manufacturer with the singular fact that in one district alone there have been within the last two years ninety new mills in operation? "In my particular district," says Mr. Horner, "there have been ninety-one new mills brought into work within the last two years." But you will answer that they were built before—that they were begun before the present state of things commenced; yet, if no profit was likely to be made, if they could only be worked at a loss, surely it would have been better to let them remain unoccupied than to have set them working in every direction, with the evidence before your eyes that they could only be worked at a loss? The words of Mr. Horner are,—

> "Finding that there was this great increase in the consumption of cotton, I was led to the inquiry, what had been the increase of mills in my district; and it will be seen by the list in the appendix marked No. 2, that of new mills and others in existence, but newly set to work, the number since the 1st of January 1839, was ninety-one, having the power of 3,350 horses. It must be remembered, too, that I am speaking of them in my own district only."

But then you say, "it is true our exports have increased, but that is in consequence of the falling off in the home consumption." If I have not mistaken the argument of the hon. Gentleman, the member for Manchester, he says, that although it is true that our exports have increased, yet that there has been such a falling off in the home consumption on account of the dearness of provisions, that the goods having been manufactured and the demand at home having decreased, it became necessary to dispose of them in some way or other, and therefore they have been sent abroad. Now, just let us look at the history of the progress of the cotton trade. It is impossible for me to dispute the evidence of the existence of severe distress, and I am right in stating that of all the man[illegible]uring trades that of cotton has suffered m[illegible] I may also observe that in those districts in which cotton was the chief manufacture, there d[illegible] the greatest distress prevail. I wish to justify my own position, and to show that the prejudicial effect attributed to the operation of the Corn-laws has been exaggerated. I cannot, I confess, entertain the confident expectation that a change in the Corn-laws will be found to afford any sudden, immediate, or extensive relief to that distress which I so much lament. And now I turn to the question of home consumption. Here is a pamphlet which I believe to be a high authority—it is the pamphlet of Mr. Greg. He gives a statement of the quantity of cotton manufactured in this country in each year since 1824—first, an account of cotton exported in goods and yarn, and then the amount of cotton consumed by the home market. Now, during by far the greater period of time which he takes, the Corn-laws have been in operation. I think it will be admitted that to select a particular year would hardly be fair, and that in making a comparison you had much better take three or four consecutive years upon which to form a judgment, than to argue for a solitary or particular case. For instance, I am sure it would be thought unfair if I said I would show you that the price of provisions had nothing to do with the home consumption of manufactures, and then took the year 1840, when the price of corn was very high, to bear me out in saying so. For if I take that year, I find that there was a greater consumption of manufactured cotton than in any one preceding year. You say to me that the price of provisions prevents the consumption of the home-manufactured article; that the people must buy corn, but that having done so they have nothing left to expend in clothing; and that that accounts for the depression of manufactures. But what is the fact? In the year 1824 you consumed 64,000,000lbs. of cotton to supply the home demand; in 1827 you consumed 78,000,000lbs. You then went on advancing until 1840, when the amount consumed reached 175,000,000lbs.; and in the last year you consumed 103,000,000lbs. But let us now take the average of four years, when you say trade was most prosperous, for I recollect that the Manchester Chamber of Commerce stated, in a document which they presented to the Committee on Banks of Issue, that during the four years up to the end of 1836 commerce and ma ctures were in a most prosperous sta Speaking of the manufacture of cot at Manchester, the Chamber of Commerce said that they considered there never was a period of four consecutive years when the manufacture of cotton had been greater than during those four years when there was no importation of foreign corn. Is it not, then, remarkable that if the importation of foreign corn, or the exchange of foreign corn for your manufactured goods, was essential for your prosperity—is it not remarkable that during the four years which were distinguished above all others for the prosperity of the cotton manufacture, there was a less amount of imported corn than in any other? From 1833 to 1836 inclusive, the whole amount of foreign wheat imported into this country did not exceed 130,000 quarters on the average. I know perfectly well what the answer is. I know you may say—"True, manufactures were prospering during that period when the importation of foreign corn was very slight, but you nevertheless prove the advantage to manufactures of cheap provisions, by selecting a period at which the average price of wheat did not exceed 47*s*." Yes, but then in saying that you abandon the argument that the importation of foreign corn in exchange for your manufactures is essential for your prosperity. I am showing you that the four years which the Manchester Chamber of Commerce selected as years of the greatest prosperity were the years during which there was the least importation of foreign corn. But then you say to me—"True, we did not want the importation of foreign corn then, because in 1835 the price of our own corn was only 39*s*. 2*d*., and although there might have been great agricultural distress at that period, still the cheapness of corn supplied the necessity of imported corn." Your argument is, that according as corn is cheap so will manufactures flourish. I will take Mr. Greg's account for the years 1833, 1834, 1835, and 1836, and compare those four years of cheapness with the four last years, when corn was extraordinarily high. There has been no such great increase of population during that period as to call for any particular notice, but making what allowance you please on that account, I take the four years of cheap provision, and I find that on the average of those four years there were manufactured 279,000,000lbs. of cotton; that during the same period there was exported in goods and yarn 160,000,000lbs., and that there was reserved for home consumption in those years of cheap provision 119,000,000lbs. In the last four years, when the price of provisions was high, there was manufactured on the average, instead of 279,000,000lbs., 369,000,000lbs. There was exported, instead of 160,000,000lbs. 227,000,000lbs., and, coming to the important question of home consumption, I find that while in the cheap year there was reserved for home consumption 119,000,000lbs. of cotton wool during the last four years, being the dear years, the quantity so reserved was 142,000,000lbs. According to Mr. Greg the quantity reserved for home consumption in 1833 was 116,000,000lbs.; in 1834, 108,500,000lbs.; in 1835, 121,100,000lbs.; and in 1836, 131,300,000lbs. The quantity reserved for home consumption during the last four years was, in 1838, 173,600,000lbs.; in 1839, 117,000,000lbs.; in 1840, 175,400,000lbs.; and in 1841, 103,500,000lbs.; making, as I said before, an annual home consumption of 142,000,000lbs., as compared to 119,000,000lbs. for the four preceding years. Mr. Greg says, that the internal consumption does not continue to bear the same proportion to the exports. But is that a fair test? Is it fair to argue by saying, "I will show you that the exports bear a greater proportion one year to the consumption than another?" I think not. I think the question should be, what is the amount of progressive increase? And I ask you, whether you don't find that, notwithstanding the increase of population, which accounts certainly, as it ought to do, for some increase in the home consumption—whether you don't find that the consumption of cotton goods, if you will take it upon the average of two, three, or four years, that the internal consumption has greatly exceeded the increase of population? The diminution during the last year, as compared with the previous year, does certainly fortify the argument that the increase in the price of provisions may have led to a diminished consumption. But you should always bear in mind that the consumption of the year before was extraordinary and unusually great, the quantity of cotton consumed by the home demand in 1840 being 175,000,000lbs. The years 1838 and 1840 were the two years of the greatest consumption of cotton goods ever known. In 1838 it was 173,000,000lbs., but it fell next year to 117,000,000lbs. In 1840 it rose again to 175,000,000lbs,, and I doubt whether the natural effects of that sudden increase would not, under any circumstances, be some considerable diminution in the following year. All I can say is, admitting as I do, and deeply deploring, the distress which at present exists in the country, on account above all, of the condition of the labouring classes. that although they may treat me as they please—although they may burn me in effigy—yet all the manifestations of displeasure they can make, will not in the slightest degree abate my sympathy for their sufferings, or lessen my sincere desire to relieve them. It is on their account that I chiefly deplore the distresses which I admit to exist. It is because of their sufferings that I principally lament these disastrous occurrences. I know the manufacturers are entitled to some share of our sympathies. They have no doubt sustained great losses. It may not be easy to calculate their extent, but we may form some rough estimate of it. I will just refer to a document emanating from the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. What says the president of that chamber? Speaking of over speculation he says, that he estimates, the loss of capital arising from undue excitements in trade, and from the rash speculations unfortunately entered on, at no less a sum than 40,000,000*l.* sterling. Are we sure that we have survived the effects proceeding from that cause? Looking at the number of railway speculations, at the speculations in joint-stock banks, at the application of capital to every variety of speculative enterprise can we be sure that this 40,000,000*l.*, asserted to have been sunk, is the ultimate extent of the national loss?

Mr. *Cobden* said, that the calculations made by the president of the chamber did not refer to losses by railway or joint-stock bank speculations alone, but comprehended every species of loss sustained in manufacturing enterprise.

Sir *R. Peel:* I quoted from the document itself, and I understood the application to be general, but the point is not of much importance. Sir, I now come to that part of the subject which is by far the most painful. I am called upon to speak of the distress existing in the country, and of the means to be taken for its relief. And here I am bound to state, that I still adhere to the opinion I have expressed, that in an artificial state of society—in a manufacturing country like England—you must expect that concurrently with a great demand for employment there may be extreme though partial suffering. An hon. Gentleman who has spoken in the course of the present debate has referred to the condition of the hand-loom weavers. Now, let us take the condition of those artisans in 1836—let us consider their state at that period. 1836 it will be remembered, was a year of great prosperity. It was announced in the speech from the Throne, at the opening of the Parliamentary Session for that year,

> "That the state of the commerce and manufactures of the United Kingdom is highly satisfactory."

The address in reply to the speech of that year was moved by Sir John Wrottesley and was seconded by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Sheffield (Mr. Parker). The former hon. Baronet, in the course of his speech said,

> "Never was there a more prosperous moment in all branches of trade. * * There is no speculation, but our prosperity arises from a steady and increasing demand, and orders from houses of undoubted credit, more numerous than even our extensive manufacturers can furnish. The labourers of England are fully employed, at adequate wages, and a bountiful Providence, during three successive years, has provided them with an ample supply of food."

Mr. Parker said,

> "I turn to the state of trade, and certainly never were there such cheering prospects announced by any sovereign to any people. The business is sound, and not on speculation. Consignments follow and do not precede orders. Payments are made in cash beyond all former precedent, and activity is regulated by prudence."

He then went on to give a statement showing the vast increase in our cotton exports, and said that he believed,

> "That in two years steam power would be wanted in Lancashire to the amount of 7,000 horses, and 70,000 or 80,000 people to supply that power."

That was in 1836. Now, my proposition is this—that concurrently with very considerable national prosperity there may be very severe partial distress. As I said before, I know not by what legislation we can meet that distress. Of course any absurd attempt to interfere with the direction of the industry of the nation would be ridiculous. I am not one of those who attribute to the increase of machinery any falling off in demand. I believe that the greater the skill and the greater the improvements in machinery, we shall find upon the whole the more permanent and comprehensive results, and the greater demand for manual labour.

Taking into account the number of persons employed in making that machinery, taking into account the persons engaged about it, and those to whom it gives indirect occupation, I think it is impossible to arrive at any other conclusion. Consider the state of the labour of this country now and twenty years ago. Compare the demand for labour at the present time and the demand for it a quarter of a century back, and you will find that the total aggregate of labour employed is very much greater now than it was then. But that is no answer to my proposition that there may be partial suffering — a suffering involving innocent persons—a suffering which legislation can scarcely reach, and which it is impossible to impeach any particular system, by attributing it to its operation. Now, taking this year, 1836, what do we find to have been the condition of the handloom weavers at that time? The commissioners had stated, with regard to the condition of the weavers at that period, that the total number of handloom weavers amounted to not less than 840,000—that a very great proportion of that number were unable to obtain a sufficiency of food of the plainest and cheapest description—that they were clothed in rags, and were in consequence prevented from attending divine worship, and unable to send their children to the parish schools—that few of them had any furniture in their houses—that many families, having no bedding, were obliged to sleep on straw; but yet that most of them had full occupation—that their labour was excessive—that they worked sometimes not less than sixteen hours a day, and that to support them under these fatigues, and to carry off the effects of their sorrows and distresses, they very generally had recourse to ardent spirits, in the purchase of which they expended a considerable proportion of their small earnings. Now, I would have the House remember that that distress occurred among a very numerous class at a period when corn was cheaper than it had been for many years previously; and bearing that circumstance in mind, I would ask whether I am advancing anything very unreasonable when I express my belief that even when the price of corn may be very considerably reduced, yet that there may exist among a large proportion of the population a very severe, though happily a partial distress? I say then, Sir, that I cannot indulge in the delusive hope—I nnot hold out to the public anything like the confident expectation—that by any kind of legislation we shall be enabled to render the people of this country entirely exempt from occasional severe suffering. I do not know that there is any nation in the world which is exempt from such unhappy visitings. Take the case of the United States. Even in that country, where the demand for labour is so great, and where the wages of labour are generally so high, you will find that there is occasionally very severe distress. I turn to the account given by Mr. Buckingham, in his work upon America—a work which has been frequently quoted in the course of the debate. Mr. Buckingham has lately visited the United States, and he gives us the results of recent observation. He cannot be taken to be especially favourable to my view of the case, for he is, as is well known, a decided friend to the repeal of the Corn-law. Now, then, let us see what Mr. Buckingham says with regard to destitution in America. I recollect that in one passage of his work he says, that in the state of New York he was surprised to find many more cases of destitution and loss of life from starvation than he could possibly have expected to have met with. He alludes also in the strongest terms to the destitution in that state, and to its numerous charitable establishments. And therefore, Sir, I must still retain the opinion I expressed on a former evening, that I think the Corn-laws have been made to bear an undue share in the sufferings and the distress which have existed in this country; and that I am not so confident as some hon. Gentlemen that an extensive modification or a repeal of those laws will produce the effects anticipated from them. My hon. Friend has just found the passage in Mr. Buckingham's work, which I will now read, with the permission of the House. Mr. Buckingham says:—

"The instances of death from destitution and want are much more numerous than I had thought possible. This indigence in a country where food can be raised so cheap, where labour is in such demand, and always paid so well, would seem unaccountable, but for the fact, that in the late mania for speculation the cultivators of the soil, instead of following up their agricultural pursuits, had left off farming to become speculators in stocks, buyers in railroads never begun, and canals never opened, as well as purchasers of lots of land on which towns were intended to be built, in which extravagant schemes they spent all their time and money, so that agriculture, the great basis of the national wealth, and the surest and steadiest security of individual prosperity in these fertile states, was so neglected, that the country was obliged to import grain for its own consumption, instead of supplying, as it ought to do, from its own surplus, the older countries of Europe."

Thus, Mr. Buckingham, to account for the extent of destitution he found in the United States, a country abounding in food, where the demand for labour is exceedingly great, and which has fertile land in abundance, attributes it to a cause which, if the matter be well considered, I believe will appear to be the true one—namely, the too great diversion of capital from land, in order, that it might be employed in unprofitable speculations. Sir, I have been charged with denying, that any good was to result from the measure I propose. I hold no such opinion; I deprecate any extravagant expectations that great and immediate benefit will result from the plan. I deprecate the same expectations from any sudden and total repeal of the Corn-laws; but I distinctly said I expected these benefits to result from this plan.—first, that agriculture would be exempted from the risk of having an enormous quantity of corn suddenly poured in at a low duty; and next, that the Bank of England, I thought also, would be less exposed to sudden drains of bullion, because the demand for corn, when it is required, will be gradual, and the intercourse with the countries which supply our demand will be more regular, and conducted in a manner more agreeable to the true principles of commerce, under my plan than upon the present system. To these advantages I distinctly laid claim; and therefore, it is not just to charge me with having predicted that my bill would do no good whatever. But I am told, that it will do no good, and particularly in reference to our trade with America. It is said, that on account of the distance of the United States from this country, while we keep up a sliding-scale, it is impossible for them to compete with continental Europe in the corn-trade to England. America is stated thus to be subjected to peculiar and great disadvantages, and one hon. Gentleman has proposed to remedy the evil by taking the averages for twelve weeks. The same proposal has been made to me by the greatest Liverpool merchant trading with the United States. The statement he made was this:—

"Let twelve weeks' averages determine the duty, instead of six weeks, and then I shall be enabled to bring corn from the United States with a knowledge of the first six weeks' average. I shall wait till I ascertain the average of the first six weeks; I shall then take my measures. There will be no material change in the next six weeks, and in the course of that period I shall bring corn from the United States."

This was the representation he made to me; but here is a statement of actual import from the United States. An order was sent to the United States by the steamer from Liverpool for 1,000 barrels of flour on the 1st of August. It was put on board the ship Siddons on the 23d of August, and arrived in Liverpool on the 13th of September. This was an actual transaction; the order was sent by the steamer, and the cargo was brought in the ordinary way. An order was at the same time sent out to Stettin for wheat on the 25th of July; it was shipped on the 13th of August, and arrived in Liverpool not till the 24th of September. Now Hull, and the eastern ports have a great advantage over Liverpool in the importation of corn from Dantzic, but I very much doubt whether the import from New York would not be effected in less time than the import from Dantzic. This transaction, which could not be got up with a view to promoting the success of this bill, in which an order for 1,000 barrels of flour was given on the 1st of August, and the cargo arrived in Liverpool on the 13th of September, I regard as a conclusive proof of the statement of the gentleman who spoke to me, that it will be possible in six weeks to bring flour from the United States; and my firm belief is, that this will frequently take place. The order will be sent by the steamer, and no such long interval as has been spoken of will occur before the shipment of the goods. The cargo may probably be on board at the time of the arrival of the order, and in the short space of six weeks in all the transaction will be completed. The right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Edinburgh, whose absence surprises me, made a speech which was confined to an attack upon myself for some statements I had made on bringing in the bill. He commenced by stating, that he represented a peculiar constituency, and that it was absolutely incumbent on him, as representing men who were swayed by no personal interest, and liberated from all prejudiced views, as being the concentrated essence of the intelligence of Edinburgh to state his views on this question to the House of Commons. Why, Sir, it is most unfortunate, that in this period of great difficulty, when no man denies, that he who attempts to make any adjustment of the Corn-laws has a difficult task to execute, the right hon. Gentleman, although placed in the peculiar position of representing a constituency whose opinions are entitled to greater weight than others, should have quietly retired to his repose, when we are approaching a division, and refused us any reflection of that light he so concentrates. What aid has the right hon. Gentleman given us to the settlement of this question? All he has yet done is to vote a negative; he voted with the noble Lord, that he could not assent to my plan. The hon. Member for Wolverhampton brings forward a counter-plan, that the Corn-laws should be at once repealed, and the right hon. Gentleman has decamped from it altogether. He says that he cannot vote for an immediate repeal; he objects to the word "now," and yet he, the representative of this enlightened constituency, has not the manliness to say "No" to a proposition from which he dissents. The word "now" is an insuperable obstacle to him; but he says, "If I give a vote in conformity with my opinion, I shall be liable to misconstruction, and, therefore, the safer plan is to absent myself altogether." Why, what is speech given to us for but to relieve ourselves from misconstruction? And what could have been an easier task for the right hon. Gentleman than to say, "This measure I consider to be precipitate, and therefore I am prepared to vote against it," accompanying this declaration of opinion with any explanation he might think necessary? But he relieves himself from any possibility of misconstruction, and leaves to others, I will not say the odium, but leaves to others the far more distinct and manly part of voting against a proposition which in their consciences they disapprove. The right hon. Gentleman said I maintained that cheap food was no advantage. I maintained no such thing, and he proved to a demonstration that I must be wrong by his supposition of a man with 40*l.* a year, and then his question if to relieve this man from a supererogatory charge of 8*l.* on account of provisions would not be an advantage to him. He proved that with a degree of irresistible force. Now, I beg to say, I maintain no such proposition. What I said was, that I thought it unwise and unjust to sow discontent and disaffection among the people of this country by telling them that there were other nations who had their provisions at a much lower price. I said I thought the relative amount of the cost of food was not the real test of enjoyment, but the command which the public of different countries had of the necessaries and luxuries of life. I did also say, but not abstractly, as the right hon. Gentleman represented I did say, that I thought by a sudden disturbance of the relations between landlord and tenant, you might produce cheapness of provisions, but I did not believe you would remedy the ills under which the country is labouring by adding fresh causes of disturbance of those relations, by bringing distress on the great body of the agriculturists. I maintain that opinion still. And it was with these qualifications, that I said, I thought you were bound in attempting to introduce cheapness of food to guard the interests which had grown up under a system of protection, and under which so much capital had been applied to agriculture. I also made use of an argument, the force of which you deny, but which I maintain, that it is not wise that the substantial supply of this country in all seasons should be derived from foreign states. These were the qualifications with which I accompanied my opinion, that it could not follow from cheapness of food, that there must necessarily be relief from the evils under which we are now suffering. One word now, and one word only, on the nature of the motion on which I trust we are about to divide. It is an absolute declaration of opinion, that the Corn-laws ought to be instantly repealed. The hon. Member for Wolverhampton, so deeply is he impressed with the policy of immediate repeal, has not moved that any prospective measures should be taken with a view to repeal. The resolution he submits to us for the vote is, that the Corn-laws be at once repealed. [Mr. *M. Philips*, "hear."] The hon. Gentleman opposite says, he can acquiesce in that motion; he thinks if they could be repealed to-night, they ought to be so. But those who think with the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell), that agriculture has a claim for protection on account of the special burdens it sustains—those who agree with the noble Lord that, even if these laws are unwise, there should not be a sudden and rapid disturbance of the interests which have grown up under them, cannot vote with the hon. Gentleman. All those who agree with the noble Lord, the late Secretary for Foreign Affairs, that there ought to be a fixed duty on the import of foreign corn, but that it should be for the purposes of revenue—a doctrine not quite consistent with the flourishing peroration on the absolute advantage of man depending upon man—cannot vote with the hon. Gentleman. The noble Lord had come forward and stated distinctly that native agriculture, in his opinion, had no claim to protection, but that it was politic for mere revenue to lay a duty on the import of foreign corn; but I very much doubt whether an excise duty on corn would not answer his purpose better. He proposed a fixed duty of 8*s.* per quarter, on the import of foreign corn; but would it not be better, with his views to propose a duty of 4*s.* per quarter to be equally applied to corn the produce of our own soil and that of foreign countries; and for this reason, because the produce of this country having no claim to protection, it clearly would carry out his views as to the advantage of man being dependent on man, if he imposed his duty equally upon all corn? Does the noble Lord dispute that doctrine? It is utterly impossible for him to deny it. If a tax on corn be legitimate merely for the purpose of revenue, excluding altogether the idea of protection, depend upon it it is equally legitimate to tax domestic and foreign corn, and it would be more in correspondence with the noble Lord's own argument to equalise the duty rather than lay it on foreign corn exclusively. Those who concur with the noble Lord in that opinion cannot vote with the hon. Gentleman. All those again who dread the consequences of disturbing the relations of Ireland to this country in respect of agriculture, who think there might be some risk, who are alarmed now at my reduction in the duty on oats—all those who dread the consequences to Ireland of a sudden, unlimited, and immediate importation of foreign oats into this country—even those who hesitate on this subject, cannot vote with the hon. Gentleman. Those again who think there should be any interval of time between the present and the total abrogation of duty cannot vote with the hon. Gentleman. The hon. Gentleman has given a vague intimation that he might possibly consent to something if he were certain of carrying his motion, but as the motion stands, the question on which we must vote is this—that the Corn-laws shall be at once repealed. Those who are unwilling to incur that risk cannot vote with the hon. Gentleman. It is needless for me to say, that with my views on this subject, it is impossible for me to assent to the proposition of the hon. Gentleman. Looking to the proposal I have made, and having heard the speech of the hon. and learned Member for Liskeard (Mr. C. Buller), who told us that he thought vested interests ought to be cautiously dealt with; that he thought we ought not to excite undue apprehensions and alarm on the part of the agricultural interest; that he thought the consequences might be, even if those alarms were unfounded, of the most injurious character to the best interests of the country by leading to the diminished production of wheat—when I look at the proposal I have made, and the consequences of the course the hon. and learned Gentleman describes, I cannot imagine why he can refuse to vote with me against the hon. Member for Wolverhampton. This I know, although of all Gentlemen who have spoken on that (the Opposition) side of the House, the hon. and learned Gentleman wishes to lead the way to ultimate repeal. [Mr. *Buller:* "No."] Well, at least to a material diminution of the duty; yet he spoke with so much just, wise caution and circumspection as to the necessity of not exciting alarm and apprehension in the agricultural body (to which I, perhaps, am particularly sensitive), that I think if I could impress him with the extent of excitement of which I have received accounts, arising even from the modified proposition I have submitted, the hon. and learned Gentleman would see I have advanced as far as I can without inflicting that injury upon existing interests which he so earnestly deprecates, and therefore upon mature reflection I hope he will vote with me against the proposition of his hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton. When I recollect what were the views of Mr. Ricardo—no particular friend to the agricultural interest—who thought that the present system of Corn-laws were altogether defective; who thought you ought to pave the way for a better system, but who yet thought it of the utmost importance to deal tenderly with land, and proposed that a fixed duty of 20*s.* should be imposed on foreign corn for the first year, and gradually diminishing each year by 1*s.*, until it reached 10*s.*, where it was to remain stationary. [An hon. *Member:* That was fifteen years ago.] Well, but the landed interest requires pretty nearly the same protection now as then. When I compare the scale I have proposed with that laid down by Mr. Ricardo—so steady a friend to free-trade and the principles of liberal policy—when I compare my scale with that proposed by Mr. Whitmore in 1828, it is impossible to deny that, as compared with these scales, my plan is a material relaxation. Let me now, in conclusion, express an earnest hope, that if the decision of the House shall be taken by a decisive majority against the proposition of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton; coupling such decision with that given against the motion of the noble Lord the Member for London, and in favour of my plan; bearing in mind that as the commercial and manufacturing interests of this country are in a state of depression, nothing can tend so much to aggravate the distress as any sudden or violent change in the Corn-laws, in ignorance, too, of the other proposals which the Government have to make—I trust, the proposition of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton having been negatived, the House, in deference to public feeling, and in compliance with the public wishes, will proceed with as much expedition as possible, consistently with due deliberation, to pass this bill, not in aggravation of the duty, but as a material remission and relaxation of duty into the law of the land.

Mr. *Hastie* explained, that in 1839 our differences with China began, and since that period the direct exports had fallen off; but instead of shipping direct to Canton, our merchants had shipped to Bombay, Manilla, and Singapore. The number of ships that cleared out direct from England, in 1838, were forty-three, measuring 23,709 tons; in 1839, they were twenty-four, with 11,705 tons; and in 1840, they were only twenty, with 7,000 tons. [The hon. Gentleman was proceeding with some details of the increased exports to Bombay, &c., but was stopped by loud cries of "divide," and "order."]

Mr. *Johnstone* rose amidst loud cries of "divide" and "adjourn." The hon. Member moved the adjournment of the debate.

Sir *John Easthope* seconded the motion, [*Cries of "divide," "go on," and "adjourn."*]

The question having been put,

Lord *John Russell* said, I know not whether there may or may not be any reason why this debate should not conclude to-night; but this I do know, that if the debate is to be concluded, every attention ought to be given to those hon. Gentlemen who may feel it to be their duty to address the House. I must say, that I rise for the purpose of protesting against the doctrine, or the inference to be drawn from what has been laid down by the right hon. Baronet. The right hon. Gentleman tells us that here is a motion made with which he differs, upon which he hopes the House will come to a division as soon as possible, and that having come to that division, the House has nothing to do but to pass his measure into a law as quickly as possible. Why, this is a question upon which Parliament is called upon to deliberate—it is a question on which Parliament is called upon to frame a statute. The executive Government is bound to give its best attention to the proposals which they make to Parliament, and it is not of so much importance what the executive Government proposes, as what Parliament shall enact. What the executive Government has to propose, is merely the measure which they consider will best meet the evil which they have to remedy—that which Parliament shall agree to becomes the law of the land. Therefore, what Parliament has to decide is of the utmost importance to the interests of the country. But what length of time did the executive Government take to consider the measure which they should propose? We are told, that the representatives of the people should hasten to pass, should hurry to decide, on that measure; and that measure, during all the agitation which prevailed, all the uncertainty which existed as to the price of corn, all the uncertainty which existed as to foreign commerce, as to whether the measure to be brought forward should or should not relieve, or in any degree mitigate the distresses of the country, occupied the attention of the executive Government during five months, before they could determine what it should be. Now, having taken that time—having taken on themselves to frame a scale which, after all, turned out to be a scale different in particulars, and in particulars only, from the present law—surely the representatives of the people, of the agricultural interests, of the commercial interests, and of the manufacturing interests, are bound to give every attention to such a measure, and are not to be told by a Minister, that they should hasten to bring their deliberations to a conclusion. What would be the consequence of a hasty and ill-considered decision? I have heard in the course of this discussion that there is to be nothing of finality in this decision. That evil, if evil it is, is not to apply to our decision upon the Corn-laws; but I must say, that I think that will not be the view which the agricultural interest will take of it. The right hon. Baronet has told us of apprehensions entertained. Those apprehensions have been subdued by the right hon. Baronet, and I think that his measure would have subdued far greater apprehensions than appear to have been excited. But the agricultural interest may say, when you have passed this measure, "these are the terms to which you require us to submit; these are the changes to which undoubtedly we on our part assented; but we think that we have sacrificed enough to the interests of the country, and having made these sacrifices and these arrangements, we call on Parliament to abide by them." That, I have no doubt, will be the language of the agricultural interest, if you pass this scale; and that being the case, it is still more incumbent on you to consider well what the law is which you are about to pass; and that you should give every attention to every hon. Member who may think that the interests of his constituents call upon him to address the House. There is one other topic to which I will allude but for one moment. The right hon. Baronet thought fit to make some remarks with reference to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh, who is not now in his place. The course of abstaining from voting is not that which I mean to take upon this occasion. The course which I shall take will be to vote against the motion of my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton; but I do think that there are cases in which an hon. Member may consider that his duty does not require him to vote; and I am glad that this is not the first time an occasion of this description has arisen; because I do not know that the reformed Parliament could ever have assembled, had it not been that certain Members of the other House of Parliament, forming the majority of that House, not favourable to the passing of the Reform Bill, had thought it their duty to absent themselves—to entirely absent themselves from the division on that bill, in consequence of which step that bill was carried into a law. Without knowing what the facts are, I suspect that if an investigation were to be made, it would be found that the greater number of the present Cabinet, being then Members of the House of Lords absented themselves on that occasion, and I think that they will not rest satisfied under the sweeping condemnation by the right hon. Baronet of all those who absent themselves from divisions in the course of the discussions of Parliament. I hope, therefore, that the right hon. Baronet, if he has any further sentences to pass on those who absent themselves from any particular division, will have some mercy on those very considerate persons who are now his colleagues.

Sir *Robert Peel:* The noble Lord has been good enough to lay down some propositions which it is very difficult to contend against. First, he says that it is of more importance what the House shall enact than what a Minister shall propose. It is impossible to contest that fact. He was also good enough to say that a measure could not become the law of the land until it is enacted by Parliament. That is elementary information, but it is information which those who have sat in Parliament for some time do not require. The noble Lord referred to what fell from me upon the subject of the termination of this debate; and he said that I expressed a hope that the House would proceed to the expression of an opinion upon this question, inconveniently omitting what I said, by way of parenthesis, which was to this effect—with all the deliberation due to the magnitude of the subject. I did express the wish which I entertained, and which I believed to be in conformity with the public feeling, that the House should, so far as is consistent with the public interest, and the great interests involved in this question, approach its settlement as speedily as possible. It may excite the indignation of the noble Lord, but I beg leave to repeat it. I was not aware that the noble Lord would deem it necessary to vindicate his right hon. Friend by the example of the House of Lords. I laid down no general proposition that any hon. Member was bound to vote on every question which may be brought forward, but I said that when an hon. Member comes forward and states that on account of his constituents he feels it incumbent on him to take part in the debate, and that he had no doubt that the Corn-laws ought not now to be repealed, he might without subjecting himself to any misapprehension, have given his vote in conformity with that feeling.

Sir *C. Napier* [" *loud cries of* " *divide*" *and* "*adjourn*,] would only detain the House for one minute. He did not know whether he had rightly understood the right hon. Baronet, that a merchant in Liverpool had written a letter from that city to America, for a cargo of corn, and that in six weeks the cargo had arrived. Now, he should like to ask the right hon. Baronet whether, if a merchant at Liverpool wrote, by means of steam communication, for a cargo of corn, although a ship might with a fair wind, arrive back to Liverpool in six weeks, if the ship had a foul wind, he stood any chance of getting an answer in that time? The right hon. Baronet had spoken of corn being brought from America; if a vessel was sent to Alexandria to bring corn, it would take two months to go and return; if to Odessa, three months; and he professed his belief that no vessel could go to and return from any port in the Mediterranean in less than two months. [" *cries of* " *divide*" *and* " *adjourn*."]

Sir *R. Peel* said, that if hon. Members had not spoken, and wished to do so, he had no objection to the debate being continued [" *cries of* " *go on*," *and* " *divide*."]

Mr. *Johnstone* thought that there were hon. Members of that House who would wish to express their feelings upon this all-important question, and he should, therefore, persist in his motion, for an adjournment of the debate.

Debate adjourned.

The House resumed.

Exchequer Bills—Public Business.] Mr. *Hawes* ventured to express a hope that the protracted debate upon the Corn-laws would not prevent the right hon. Chancellor of the Exchequer bringing on the motion of which he had given notice for this evening (Thursday), upon the subject of the Exchequer bill fraud. The interest excited upon this really very important question was intense, and he hoped that the right hon. Gentleman, even if the discussion could not be taken this evening, would have no objection to make the statement which he proposed to address to the House upon the subject if possible, to allay the apprehensions which almost universally prevailed upon the subject.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* regretted that he did not feel at liberty to interfere with the course of the debate upon the question of the Corn-laws, the importance of which he felt to be paramount. If each Member would interfere and bring forward the particular motion of which notice had been given, there would be nothing but delay. The question, however, was one regarded by the country as of particular importance, and he trusted that every facility would be afforded him to bring it forward. As far as he was concerned it should be brought forward with the least possible delay. He trusted that at any rate he should be able to bring it forward on or before Tuesday.

Mr. *Hawes* wished to know whether this would be the first business the Government would bring forward on the House coming to a determination on the corn resolutions. He sincerely hoped that the subject would be brought forward with the slightest possible delay.

Sir *Robert Peel* observed, that all he asked was, that the House should agree or come to some determination on the resolutions which he had proposed respecting the corn duties, and to allow him to bring in a bill founded on them. When this was done, other business would be proceeded with immediately.

Mr. *Labouchere* said, that he apprehended that it was desirable before the House came to a resolution relative to the duties to be paid on the importation of corn from the colonies, it should know what was the determination of the Government as to the proposed duty to be paid on the importation of corn from the United States into Canada. He did not ask for an answer now, but he trusted that the determination of the Government would be communicated to the House with the least possible delay.

Sir *R. Peel* agreed with the right hon. Gentleman, that it was desirable that the course proposed to be adopted should be communicated to the House within as short a period as possible. He would take care that this should be done.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, February 24, 1842.

Minutes.] Bill. 1ª· Witt's Estate.

Petitions presented. By the Earl of Radnor, from Banff, and various other places, Lord Brougham, from Perth, Whitechapel, and other places, and the Earl of Carlisle, from Carlisle, for the Repeal of the Corn-laws.—By Lord Brougham, from Congregations of Antrim, Dromore, Downpatrick, and other places, for Legalizing Marriages by Dissenters.—By Lord Feversham, from Confectioners of York, and Dunstable, against the Importation of Confectionery from the Channel Islands. From Bathgate, for Revision of System of Taxation.—From Carlisle, complaining of Distress.—From George Tanner, for Inquiry into Deaths of two Paupers at Crediton.

EXCHEQUER-BILL-FRAUD.] Lord *Wharncliffe*, seeing the noble Lord the Controller of the Exchequer in his place, wished to know whether he had any objection to postpone to Thursday the motion of his relating to the late Exchequer-bill fraud, which now stood for Monday next? As his noble Friend the noble Duke could not attend in his place on Monday, it would be a convenience to have the noble Lord's motion postponed to another day.

Lord *Monteagle* had already postponed this motion several times in deference to the suggestion of the noble Duke, and would again consent to another postponement from the same motive; but let it be borne in mind that these postponements did not come from him, but were made to suit the convenience of noble Lords opposite.

Lord *Wharncliffe* admitted that fact, but added that the absence of the noble Duke arose from the discharge of what he considered part of his public duties elsewhere.

Motion postponed.

CORN-LAWS. PETITIONS.] Lord *Kinnaird* had to present several petitions for the repeal of the Corn-laws, which had been transmitted to him from various parts of Scotland. Amongst these were thirty-four petitions from the workmen of several factories in Dundee. Some of the petitions were signed by those engaged in the linen trade in the east of Scotland, and they prayed that, along with the tax on the import of corn, might also be removed any protecting duties on their own particular trade. They wished to have trade wholly free. Some of those petitions had been agreed to before the Government plan of a change in the Corn-laws had been agreed to, but from several of the parties he had received letters, which showed the general feeling in those parts of Scotland to which they belonged to be decidedly hostile to the Government plan. One letter, from which he would read an extract, expressed the deep regret of the writer at the plan proposed by Government, and stated that a similar feeling was prevalent throughout that part of the country. The writer expressed his fears that the tale of woe describing the distresses of the people would be met by insult; and this was evident from what he had read of what occurred in another place. ["*Order.*"] He was not reading a petition, but an extract of a letter which had been forwarded to him, and of which he could produce hundreds, all to the same effect.

The Duke of *Richmond* said, that he could produce thousands of letters all the other way.

Lord *Kinnaird* went on to read the extract, which said, that unless some means were adopted to relieve the distresses of the people, they would be driven to proceedings which would not be so easily quieted, and that if they did not oppose such measures as the Corn-laws by every means in their power, they would be untrue to themselves and to their country. To show the effect of the Corn-laws on the industry of a large class of the poor fishermen in Scotland, he would read an extract from another letter which he had received from a gentleman who had taken pains to encourage the fisheries in the Shetland Isles. The noble Lord the President of the Board of Trade had, upon the occasion of the dinner after the laying of the first stone of the Royal Exchange, taken occasion to make use of these words:—

> "I must say, that it is a circumstance of pride and gratification to me to feel that we are assembled here in celebration of such an event, in the face of this distinguished company—the concentrated representative of the wealth, the honour, the honesty, and therefore the power of the commercial interests of this great empire.
>
> "'O weel may the boatie row,
> And better may she speed;
> O weel may the boatie row
> That gains the bairns' bread.'"

In the face of that expression of feeling, the noble Earl was a member of a Government at that time about to bring forward a measure, the effect of which would be to prevent the "boatie" from earning one half bread enough for the "bairns." But he would refer to the instance to which he had alluded. His correspondent had written to inform him that he had some time ago determined to establish a fishery in one of the small islands of the Shetland district, that he had done so, and with the best result, the fishery being carried on with the highest degree of success. An offer had then been made by a Spanish merchant to take fish, to the amount of 15,000*l.*, in exchange for which flour was to have been given, but owing to the heavy amount of duty payable on the importation of foreign corn into this country, it was found impossible to accept the offer. The fishermen were thus, the writer added, robbed of one-half of their daily bread. He did hope that some of his noble Friends near him would move for an inquiry into the distress which prevailed, with the view to see how far it might be remedied.

The Earl of *Ripon* said, that the noble Lord was perfectly welcome to take any advantage that he could of a supposed inconsistency in quoting the verse of the song on the occasion alluded to. And he begged to say that he had no idea when he quoted it that it had any reference whatever to the Corn-laws, otherwise he certainly should not have made use of it. As regarded another point of the noble Lord's remarks, namely, that which related to the exchange of salt fish for Spanish flour, he wished the noble Lord would inform him whether the Spanish Government had a Corn-law or not? and what duty the Spanish Government imposed upon our salt fish imported there? There was no article, he begged to say, so heavily taxed in Spain as salt fish imported there. It was quite clear, therefore, that if the Spanish Government would not accept of our salt fish but with a high duty, almost indeed amounting to a prohibition, there was not much chance of the correspondent of the noble Lord receiving Spanish flour in exchange, particularly as there was a Corn-law in Spain.

Lord *Kinnaird* thought there was a connexion between the Corn-laws, at all events, and those lines of the song which said,

> "O weel the boatie rows,
> Which gives the bairns bread."

Surely between bread and the Corn-laws there must be an affinity.

Petitions laid upon the Table.

DISSENTERS' MARRIAGES (IRELAND.] Lord *Brougham* had also to present several petitions from Presbyterian congregations in the counties of Antrim, Down, and Tyrone, and in several other places in Ireland, praying for some legislative enactment for legalizing the marriages of Dissenters with members of the Established Church. The whole of these petitioners expressed the greatest anxiety at the recent decision of the learned judges in Ireland against the legality of those marriages, and it was very natural that such anxiety should be felt on the subject. He had seen what he believed to be a correct note of the grounds of the decision to which the judges had unfortunately come on this question, and though he feared to express any opinion which might be held adverse to the decision, yet it was no departure from that courtesy which he sincerely desired to observe towards those learned persons, he said, that those reasons had failed to satisfy him. The feeling which he entertained on the question was not confined to himself alone. It was shared by others who had duly considered the subject. The desision, he must say, was the more to be lamented, as the question was raised in a shape which made a revision of it by any other tribunal impossible.

The Marquess of *Clanricarde* said, that the late decision of the Irish judges was directly opposed to the opinions given on the same question in 1816. On that occasion the late Sir S. Romilly referred to the case of a gentleman who was convicted of bigamy about that time, one of the marriages having been celebrated by a Presbyterian clergyman, and between a Presbyterian and a member of the Church of England. The case was then submitted for the opinion of the law officers of the Crown, Sir William Garrow and Sir Samuel Shepherd, and they were decidedly of opinion that the marriage was perfectly valid. In that opinion Lord Eldon was known to have fully concurred, and the sentence of the court, of transportation, was carried into execution on the convicted party.

Lord *Campbell* was desirous of again calling the attention of his noble and learned Friend on the woolsack to the subject to which the petitions which had just been presented to the House referred. His noble and learned Friend was aware of the intense anxiety which was felt by a large class of persons upon the subject. He had lately received several communications relative to the painful situation of parties affected by the decision of the Irish judges. No doubt had existed for many years but that marriages contracted under the circumstances in question were perfectly valid. He would express a hope not only that the Government might at the earliest opportunity introduce a bill to remedy the evil, but that his noble and learned Friend on the woolsack would introduce the bill into that House in the first instance. It appeared that the House of Commons was engaged, night after night, with subjects of great public importance, which prevented them from turning their attention to the subject; and he was of opinion that it would be found much more convenient to introduce the bill immediately into that House, and he earnestly hoped that his noble and learned Friend would adopt that course.

Lord *Brougham* said, he most strongly concurred in recommending to his noble and learned Friend on the woolsack to bring the measure forward in that House rather than in the House of Commons. He would beg to remind his noble and learned Friend that he had on a former occasion concurred with him in complaining that their Lordships were left in the early part of the Session for many weeks with scarcely anything to occupy their attention, and that towards its close a heap of business was thrown upon them, a great part of which was thrown over to the next Session for want of time in which to give it that due consideration to which it was entitled. In the state in which business was now before the House, their Lordships could give full attention to the measure, if his noble and learned Friend should introduce it there.

The *Lord Chancellor* said, it was not his intention at that moment to say a single word as to the law of this question. He would only observe that the Irish judicial bench was never filled by lawyers possessed of more legal knowledge than at the present moment. The question as to those mixed marriages had been ably argued before it, and full time had been given for its due consideration before its decision was pronounced. With respect to the question put to him by his noble and learned Friend (Lord Campbell), he would say, that a bill on the subject referred to had been prepared, and was at present before the law officers of the Crown, as it related to a very delicate subject. Whether the measure to be introduced should be brought in first in that House or in the House of Commons was a matter not yet decided; but if it should be decided to have it brought in the first instance before their Lordships, as little delay should be allowed to intervene as possible.

Petitions laid on the Table.

THE POOR-LAW COMMISSIONERS]. The *Bishop of Exeter* rose to present the petition of which he had given notice on a former evening. It was of such length that he would not take up their Lordships' time by having it read at the Table; but he would, as he proceeded, give a correct abstract of its contents. It contained very grave charges against the Poor-law commissioners of England and Wales, and, as it did, he had taken care that before laying it on their Lordships' Table, copies of it should be placed in the hands of the parties to whose conduct it related. Those parties were now in full possession of all the facts which were charged against them, and he had the satisfaction of knowing that the case of the commissioners would be stated to their Lordships by a noble Lord high in office, whose zeal and ability would leave nothing untold which in his opinion made for their justification. To this he had no objection whatever. On the contrary, he thought it but fair and just that the Government should protect its public officers where they acted fairly in the discharge of their public duty. He would, however say, that unless a great part of the facts alleged in the petition were fully contradicted, much of grave charge would remain, for which they would remain responsible. He would now proceed, and though he would endeavour to make his narrative as brief as the case would admit, still he feared his trespass on the time of their Lordships would not be very short. In the month of January, 1840, two paupers died in the workhouse of Crediton, in Devon, under circumstances which excited a very strong and general feeling in that town and its vicinity. Rumours went abroad as to the case, and the names of the guardians were mentioned. In consequence of those rumours, a highly respectable individual, an attorney at Crediton, felt it his duty to make some inquiries on the subject. He at first disbelieved the rumours which had reached him, but as he went on with his inquiry the proofs came so thick upon him that he could no longer doubt that the rumours were well founded. In this feeling he addressed a letter to James Wentworth Buller, Esq., the chairman of the board of guardians. In mentioning the name of this gentleman he must say, that a more respectable or honourable man did not exist. As he took a great interest in the condition of the poor, it was natural that Mr. Tanner, the attorney to whom he had alluded, should address him on such a subject, and the more particularly as he was then chairman of the board of guardians. On the 30th of April, 1840, Mr. Tanner addressed the following letter to Mr. Buller:—

"*Crediton, April* 30, 1840.

"Sir—a very serious report having for some time past been in circulation, relative to the death of a late pauper of Sandford, called William Lock, who, it is alleged, perished or expired in the month of January last in a cold dark shed or outhouse belonging to the Crediton Union Workhouse, where he had been improperly, and for several days before, placed, whilst labouring under a most severe and dangerous illness, I have, in conjunction with a friend of mine, taken some pains to investigate the matter, and it grieves me to say, that I fear there is too much reason to believe that such a report is true, and that its accuracy can be substantiated by incontrovertible evidence." (It then proceeded to request an open and impartial inquiry.) "I have, &c.,

"G. Tanner.

"*To James W. Buller, Esq., Chairman of the Crediton Poor-law Union.*

This letter was read at the board of guardians at their next meeting, but the board took no notice of it. At least no acknowledgment was sent of its receipt, and so far from complying with the request for investigation, the guardians did not accord to the writer even the civility of an answer. In consequence of this Mr. Tanner felt it his duty to address the Poor-law commissioners in London, and, accordingly on the 6th of May, in the same year, he sent them the following letter:—

"*Crediton, Devon, May* 6, 1840.

"Gentlemen—I take the liberty of transmitting for your immediate and serious consideration, a letter, which I felt it my duty to address to the Crediton board of guardians at their last board-day, and as no reply has been given to it, nor any steps, which I have heard of, taken in the matter, I am thus compelled, respectfully but earnestly, to beg that you will require a prompt and public investigation of the subject of it. As the public press has alluded to this deplorable case, and as the report of it, with the usual exaggerations and embellishments, no doubt, has been circulated far and wide, I do submit, that the most open inquiry should be instituted, at which, if permitted, I think I shall be prepared to substantiate, by indisputable testimony, more than the lamentable facts stated, and more than one such case. In addressing you as public functionaries, in whom the Legislature of this country has thought fit to repose such unlimited and awful powers, I am convinced I need not point out the duty which you owe that Legislature and your country, to cause every well-founded charge to be thoroughly and impartially sifted. In this instance common justice to all persons and parties, as well as humanity, imperatively demand it, and I feel assured you will not forget the maxim 'Judex damnatur cum nocens absolvitur.'

"I have, &c.

"G. Tanner.

"*To the Poor-law Commissioners for England and Wales.*"

This was on the 6th of May, and on the 9th of May Mr. Tanner received a letter from the Poor-law commissioners, stating that the matter should receive their immediate attention. Mr. Tanner naturally relied upon this assurance, and three days afterwards he wrote a letter to them, to an extract from which letter he the (Bishop of Exeter) should have occasion presently to call the attention of their Lordships. But, to his utter astonishment, he had found, that though on the 12th of May he had written to say he was then ready to proceed, and that having heard from a private source that the investigation was to take place on the following Saturday, the 16th, he requested permission to call before the assistant commissioner the persons with whom the rumour had originated, and from whom he had received his information, the inquiry had closed. This course followed by Mr. Tanner was that which every fair man, eager to bring his witnesses before the tribunal appointed for the inquiry, would have adopted. On the 14th, however, he received an answer from the Poor-law commissioners, which he (the Bishop of Exeter) would now read. It was as follows:—

"That they (the commissioners) had received from Mr. Gilbert, the assistant-commissioner, depositions so conclusive, negativing the purport of his general statement, that they were of opinion they should not be justified in causing further investigation into those cases; but that if he would communicate any further specific facts, they would take into consideration the propriety of further inquiry."

Now, he (the Bishop of Exeter) thought the extracts he had read contained specific facts—they included the death of the pauper, William Lock, in a cold dark shed or outhouse, to which he had been confined for some days while labouring under severe and dangerous illness. It was a little hard to require anything more specific as to the terms of the complaint on its very outset. Undoubtedly, the commissioners were right in calling upon Mr. Tanner to produce his witnesses to prove the grounds of his charge. It appeared, however, that on the 9th of May—the very day on which Mr.

Tanner received the letter from the commissioners containing the assurance that they would give the matter their immediate attention—it turned out that on that very day, without any communication being made to him—without any communication with the relations of the deceased pauper, Mr. Tanner stated that he had been informed, and believed, the assistant-commissioner (Mr. Gilbert) proceeded to the inquiry, and particularly requested that all which passed on that investigation should be kept a profound secret. That request seemed to have been strictly complied with, for nothing whatever transpired as to such an inquiry having taken place. Mr. Tanner having received, on the 14th of May, that communication from the commissioners, still offering, as he (the Bishop of Exeter) had already stated, to go into any other specific facts he might be prepared to adduce, wrote to them this letter:—

"*Crediton, May* 20, 1840.

"Gentlemen—I have been honoured with your letter of the 14th instant, and deeply regret that you are of opinion that you would not be justified in causing further investigation to be made into this case, because I fear that the depositions taken on one side only will not generally be considered as satisfactory, or tend to allay the feeling which the report had excited previously to my first addressing you. You will be pleased to bear in mind that not a single witness has been examined by your assistant-commissioner, nor a tittle of evidence heard by him, that I am aware of, in support of the statement made. How then do you know whether such statement can or cannot be substantiated? How can you decide that the depositions taken cannot be answered? I sincerely hope and trust, that even on a public investigation, the evidence will most irresistibly disprove the statement of Lock and his wife; but surely they, as well as any other witnesses, ought to be heard. I have to thank you for the opportunity which you have granted me of stating any other specific facts; but I must beg respectfully to decline interfering further in the matter, unless an open inquiry be permitted."

Such was the state of things up to the 20th of May, and this might be taken and considered to be the close of the first stage of these proceedings, or he should rather say, of these non-proceedings. The next stage was somewhat more startling. It appeared that Mr. Tanner, in consequence of the Board of Guardians not having taken any notice of his complaint, communicated with the editor, or he should say the proprietor, of a most respectable newspaper—a gentleman who was a most respectable inhabitant of the city of Exeter—a gentleman who had filled the office of mayor, he believed, more than once, but certainly once—and who had been distinguished among his fellow-citizens by being recommended by his political opponents in the town-council to the Secretary of State for the office of magistrate of the city of Exeter. He (the Bishop of Exeter) mentioned these facts as a proof of the respectability of Mr. Woolmer, the gentleman to whom he now alluded. Mr. Tanner communicated the information he had received to Mr. Woolmer, and Mr. Woolmer thought the case was one which ought to be inserted in his newspaper. He, however, took care with respect to the publication of the facts. He (the Bishop of Exeter) had himself read the article which put the case hypothetically. It made no gratuitous assertions, but stated the facts as resting entirely upon rumours; and it declared the readiness of the publishers to insert any contradiction which might be sent them, willing as they were to believe that the statements could not be true. For this article so put forth to the world upon the petitioner's information to this gentleman in consequence of the refusal of the guardians to inquire, legal proceedings of the most grave and serious nature were commenced. Mr. Tanner in his petition stated, that these legal proceedings had been instituted at the instigation of the assistant-commissioner, Mr. Gilbert; and this fact was important when the conduct of the Poor-law commissioners came to be considered. He would not criticise the conduct of a private individual seeking redress and reparation to his character in a court of law, but when it appeared that a public officer had been eager to bring down the vengeance of the law upon an individual who had stated calmly, but strongly, the complaint made against a public body—to him it seemed strange that a public officer, under such circumstances, should permit such vindictive proceedings; and still more was he surprised that such a course should have been pursued, when he remembered that those public officers had been intrusted by the Legislature of the country with powers almost unprecedented; and with such powers conferred upon them it was absolutely necessary for the good of the country, and especially for the interests of the poor, that their proceedings should be nicely watched. [The Earl of *Radnor*: who were the prosecutors?] Mr. Tanner in his petition stated he had been informed, and believed, that the Board of Guardians of the Crediton Union had commenced the prosecution in question at the instigation of the assistant-commissioner. He did not mean himself to say that such was the case; he only proceeded upon the averments of the petitioner, and those averments distinctly stated the prosecution to have been got up at the instigation of the assistant-commissioner. But when the proceedings were instituted, and the case was heard in the Court of Queen's Bench, the defendant had prepared a whole body, nay, a string of affidavits, to show the truth of the facts alleged in the statement published in his newspaper. It so happened, however, that the attorney to whom had been intrusted the getting up and preparing the prosecution made some unfortunate blunder. He said "unfortunate," because if a full inquiry had taken place before the Court of Queen's Bench, a great deal of subsequent mischief would have been prevented, and their Lordships would have been spared hearing the details set forth in this petition. Unfortunately, however, there had been committed by the parties employed for the prosecution a legal mistake, upon which the counsel for the defendant declared, that though it was his client's wish that the case should be gone into on the merits, he, as his advocate, could not do otherwise than insist on the technical point which insured the dismissal of the rule. This was on the 16th of June, but in the course of the same month, he believed a further communication took place between Mr. Tanner and the commissioners in London, and also on the part of Mr. Woolmer. On the 2nd of July Mr. Woolmer took that course which he (the Bishop of Exeter) must say afforded a striking proof of the perfect fairness of that gentleman's views, and which exhibited one of the most candid proceedings of which he had ever heard. Mr. Woolmer addressed the commissioners in London in this way:—Their Lordships would remember, that the gentleman at the time was smarting under the recent infliction of the costly proceedings of the Court of Queen's Bench. However, on the 2nd of July, 1840, he wrote to the Poor-law commissioners in London as follows:—

"Gentlemen, I have had the honour to receive your letter of the 27th, and as you state your readiness to receive any further information relative to the paupers Lock and Dart, and as I am desirous of putting you in possession of the plain facts, as detailed by the different affidavits, without any comments of my own, I have borrowed of my attorney one of the briefs delivered to counsel on the occasion, which I now beg to transmit for your attentive consideration. Of course it must be distinctly understood that I forward it you merely as a loan, and without prejudice to myself, partner, attorney, or indeed any other person. The original affidavits, as well as other evidence, shall be forthcoming before your assistant-commissioner, whenever you may be pleased to direct an open inquiry into the lamentable facts they disclose; and I beg most earnestly to implore you, for the sake of justice, for the sake of the parties concerned, and for the sake of the poor, to cause a fair and public investigation to be immediately made into the matter."

To this letter Mr. Woolmer received the following answer from the Poor-law Commissioners on the 7th of July:—

"The Poor-law Commissioners acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 2nd instant, together with the documents therewith transmitted, relating to the case of the paupers Lock and Dart, who died in the workhouse of the Crediton Union, and the commissioners desire to state that the subject shall receive the immediate attention of the Commissioners."

What further communication by correspondence took place he did not know; but it seemed that on the 5th of August Mr. Gilbert, the assistant-commissioner, addressed this letter to Mr. Tanner, the petitioner:—

"Sir,—I beg to acquaint you that I shall sit at the board-room of the Crediton Union workhouse on the 14th day of this month, at 9 o'clock in the forenoon, to hear evidence on the subject of the several charges preferred to the Poor-law Commissioners by Mr. Woolmer and yourself respectively against the administration of the law in the Crediton Union. Summonses have been issued for the appearance of the several persons on whose statements the charges have been made, and they will be examined as to all the essential particulars. Solicitors or counsel will be allowed to attend, either on the part of the complainants, or on the part of any person affected by the charges, to watch the proceedings on their behalf, and to suggest such questions as they may think proper, and also to speak on the subject-matter of the inquiry and on the evidence."

Now, this letter decidedly recognised the petitioner, Mr. Tanner, and his friend, Mr. Woolmer, as the complainants, and the petitioner being not only one of the complainants, but also a solicitor, determined to attend the inquiry himself—to plead his own cause, to act as his own advocate in the matter. He therefore attended on the day appointed—viz., the 14th, but either on that day, or immediately before it, Mr. Gilbert, the assistant-commissioner, determined to do—what? Why, to summon Mr. Tanner, who had thus been previously made a complainant, and who was to have attended in his own person, the conduct of the case, as a witness. Mr. Tanner had been obliged to obey, and had submitted to an examination which lasted the whole of that and a great part of the following day. His examination had been of the strictest kind. He had been cross-examined in a most stringent manner, not that it was pretended or imagined that he had any knowledge of his own as to the facts complained of, but because he, forsooth! had made an affidavit on behalf of Mr. Woolmer in the Court of Queen's Bench. On these grounds he had been converted into a witness—his mouth was thus shut, and he was not permitted to take any part in the conduct of the proceedings. This seemed to be most unaccountable. He hoped the noble Lord behind him (Lord Wharncliffe) would be able to give some explanation of the proceeding. The case demanded an answer. The affidavit which Mr. Tanner had made stated his reason for coming forward was to show that Mr. Woolmer, by introducing the article in question into his newspaper, had not been influenced by any hostile feelings towards the guardians, but on the facts which he had investigated. Such was the case, however, that Mr. Tanner had been subjected to a most vexatious examination and cross-examination, which had occupied a day and a half, and had not been permitted to appear in person to support his complaint. He had, however, said to the assistant-commissioner, "Give me time to procure an advocate to appear for me according to the terms set forth in the letter," which he had read. The reply of the assistant-commissioner was, "Certainly;" and in accordance with that intimation he broke up his inquiry on the second day's sitting, on the distinct promise that when they met again an advocate should appear to do justice to Mr. Tanner's cause. On the 15th of August the adjournment of the investigation on these grounds took place, and on the 25th Mr. Tanner received an intimation from Mr. Gilbert, the assistant-commissioner, that the inquiry would be renewed on the 27th. This announcement necessarily astonished Mr. Tanner, and he therefore addressed a letter to Mr. Gilbert, a portion of which (all that was material) he (the Bishop of Exeter) would read:—

"You cannot forget that it was ten days since that the inquiry was adjourned *sine die*, under the uncertainty, expressed by yourself, whether the Poor-law Commissioners would or would not order its renewal; and that only one clear day is given me to provide an advocate, and prepare him for the inquiry. I beg to enclose a list of witnesses which it will be necessary should be called on my part, and in the order in which they stand on the list; and I have respectfully to request that those witnesses may be duly summoned. I cannot proceed with the inquiry satisfactorily unless those witnesses are called *seriatim* as their names are inserted on the list; and, as the Poor-law Commissioners have thought fit to make me a complainant, surely it is not unreasonable in me to expect that I should be allowed to call my own witnesses in my own order. This is the invariable practice of the courts of law; and if a different rule prevailed, the greatest injustice would be the consequence, and so it will be in this case."

This was on the 25th of August, and on the 27th the inquiry was resumed, and then, to the surprise, but not complaint of the petitioner, he found that Mr. Gilbert was to be assisted by Mr. Parker, another assistant Poor-law Commissioner. On that occasion Mr. Tanner had engaged as his advocate a most respectable solicitor of the city of Exeter, Mr. Furlong. When Mr. Furlong presented himself before the assistant-commissioners, Mr. Parker exclaimed, "Oh! we want no advocate here,"—notwithstanding the adjournment of the inquiry from the preceding day had been made expressly to afford Mr. Tanner an opportunity of procuring an advocate; and yet, when he had found one, on the faith of the promise made to him, he was told that there was to be no advocates admitted. This decision was not only extraordinary to Mr. Tanner, but to the assembled multitude, who expressed loudly their feelings and excited indignation on the occasion. Nor was the indignation confined to these parties. Mr. Buller, the chairman of the board of guardians for the union, and another gentleman, a magistrate, of equal respectability, Mr. Sillifant, the deputy-chairman of the board,—both these gentlemen strongly expressed their indignation and astonishment at the course pursued by the assistant-commissioners. It must not be forgotten that the complaint had been originally made against the board of guardians; but when those gentlemen saw that justice was refused to those who made the complaint against them, they took a course which did them infinite honour. They said, "We will not receive a dishonourable acquittal—we will resign our posts as guardians, because justice has been insulted, and the party complaining has not been permitted to make out his case." This virtually was what these gentlemen had said by their formal act of resignation. In that step nothing could be more temperate or clear than the conduct of those gentlemen. On the 29th of August, two days after the transaction, the board of guardians held a meeting, at which certain resolutions were come to, and a letter directed to be addressed to the Poor-law Commissioners in London. At that meeting, speaking of the case of the paupers Lock and Dart, the chairman and vice-chairman stated, that—

> "From the mode in which the inquiry directed by the Poor-law Commissioners is being conducted, wholly at variance as it is with the mode prescribed at its commencement, as well as with the usual course pursued in the public courts, public opinion will not be satisfied, whatever may be the result; neither will the proceedings of the Board of Guardians retain that confidence and respect in the union which is essential to the support of their orders, the welfare of the poor, and their own comfort. The chairman and vice-chairman find it necessary, therefore, to decline the responsibilities of the offices which they have hitherto held in this union, and resign the office of chairman and vice-chairman respectively. Resolved unanimously, that the board approve of the reasons assigned by the chairman and the vice-chairman, and that they feel it impossible themselves to continue any longer members of the board, and resign accordingly."

A long letter from the Poor-law Commissioners, approving of the course taken by the assistant-commissioners, having been read by the clerk to the meeting, the following resolution was moved by Mr. John Sillifant, jun., seconded by Mr. French, and adopted unanimously:—

> "That the board cannot concur in the reasons expressed by the Poor-law Commissioners in justification of the mode of inquiry which has been instituted into the case of Dart and Lock, and into the general management of the Crediton Union workhouse."

After this interference on the part of the chairman and vice-chairman of the board of guardians, and the indignation of the public present loudly expressed, the assistant-commissioner said he would not sit in a public room, but retired to a private room, with the master and surgeon of the workhouse—two officers whose treatment of the paupers had been subject matter of specific complaint. They also admitted reporters for the public papers, but they would not admit either the complainants or any person to act on their behalf; consequently, there was no person who knew what the nature of the complaint was, or by what evidence it was to be substantiated. In consequence the second resolution was passed, to this effect:—

> "That the withdrawal of the assistant-commissioners from the public room was not rendered necessary by the conduct of the persons present, which was peaceable and orderly; that the interruption arose from the refusal of the assistant-commissioners to pursue that course of inquiry which had been laid down by the assistant-commissioner at the commencement of the proceedings, according to which it had been conducted until the adjournment, and to carry out which was the understood and declared object of the adjournment."

The third was—

> "That, unwilling as the board is to make any further remarks on the present inquiry in its advanced stage,"—

That was some time after the 29th—

> "yet must they express their decided conviction, that whether an inquiry be instituted solely for the information of the Poor-law Commissioners and her Majesty's Government, or for the public satisfaction, no mode can be less expedient than that of limited publicity, and the result in the present instance cannot be satisfactory."

Fourth,—

> "That the board is not disposed to reverse its former resolution to resign, unless the Poor-law Commissioners shall indicate some course by which, in their future proceedings, that good understanding may be restored and maintained between the central and local boards which is so essential to the well-working of the system, and which it has been the anxious care of the Crediton Board of Guardians to preserve."

Now, an inquiry took place in a private room, conducted as he had mentioned; Mr. Parker, Mr. Gilbert, the master of the workhouse, and the surgeon, were present. They examined and cross-examined all the witnesses who were produced—it was said that they did this in an unequal manner; whether that was the case or no he could not say; but at any rate the parties against whom the complaint was made cross-examined all the witnesses. On the other hand, there was no opportunity afforded to the complainants to examine any witnesses. But this was not all. The commissioner, who was to examine the witnesses, did not know what the examination was about; he knew nothing of what a particular witness was brought to prove.

It was true, he was guided, with respect to a small portion, by the affidavits; but as to the rest, he took his chance as to the matter, and he (the Bishop of Exeter) had been assured that a witness was told, when he was about to relate his own story, "You are only to answer the questions put to you." Whilst he gave credit to the gentlemen for a desire to do justice, he believed them to be men of unblemished character and honour, and who did not mean to act unjustly or hastily, yet, whatever they might have meant, injustice had been practically committed. But he had not got to the full extent of the injury which had been perpetrated. A little consideration should have led these gentlemen, as men of sense and understanding, men, like Mr. Parker and Mr. Gilbert, of the legal profession, that the course they were pursuing was a most outrageous violation of decent fairness. Mr. Woolmer lent to the commissioners a paper brief, which one of his counsel had used in the Court of Queen's Bench, which had been given to see from the statement of his own case by himself on asking advice, whether or not there was sufficient ground for inquiry. This brief contained in the margin written confidential notes and instructions from Mr. Woolmer to his counsel; and yet this brief was permitted to be copied, and was placed in the hands of the party against whom the complaint was made, along with the notes and confidential instructions, and they had been used, he did not say hostilely, but they were used freely, against the complaining party, notwithstanding the protest of Mr. Tanner, and although it had been expressly stipulated that the brief was not to be used to the prejudice of Mr. Woolmer, Mr. Tanner, or anybody else. That an inquiry so conducted should have ended in the acquittal of the parties complained against, was not to be wondered at. After all this, the only class of the evidence he should advert to was the evidence of the physician and surgeon, who examined the room, and as to its fitness, he should venture to read some of their statements. On the 6th of June, four of these gentlemen had been called upon to make affidavits. Dr. Granger, a physician at Exeter, said he called the place in which the paupers died a cell; he should not dignify it with the name of a room. He says,—

> "I observed there were means provided of heating it, but they appeared very inadequate; there was a remarkably small stove outside; in my opinion, these means were not sufficient to warm the room. I think the stove was too distant and too small. I should say 65 or 70 degrees should be the temperature."

Mr. Luscombe, a surgeon, said,

> "I think the plate would produce an injurious kind of heat."

The place was not warmed by a fire-place, but by a plate, heated by a stove,—

> "But not sufficient warmth for the room. Privies are attached to the cell, although not under the same roof. This was one of our strong objections. The locality of the room was bad; its smallness was objectionable. I think it is degrading Hanwell to mention this unwholesome place with it. The drain in the corner of the room was shocking; I do not consider the drains were perfect, as the smell was most offensive."

Mr. Tucker, also, a surgeon of Exeter, said,

> "It was calculated for idiots in good health with the exception of the offensive smell; there was a most offensive smell when I first visited it (June 6): there is no such smell in the room now; the place was not fit for more than one or two idiots; it was not commonly air-tight. I thought there was too much ventilation for the winter season of the year, or an inclement season. The four holes in the wall are quite open, without shutters, having bars of iron across; I think these holes admitted too much air for that season of the year. I believe the offensive smell emanated from the privies. (There were some things here which he spared their Lordships' ears) I think the room a very improper place for persons suffering under diarrhœa. I think it very unfit for such persons to sleep in—I mean the room in June."

Mr. Harris, also, a surgeon, considered the means insufficient for heating the room.

> "In the depth of winter I do not think that was a proper room for persons labouring under diarrhœa; it was placed between two sets of privies, and this, I think, a very bad situation for persons in that state to be placed in. I should not like to keep any one there."

This was the room in which two persons were kept for several days, and in which they died. On the part of the guardians, two eminent medical men had been called to speak in favour of the fitness of the room. He would give a specimen of the evidence of those gentlemen. Mr. Samuel Barnes, a surgeon, a man of eminent character and talents, said there was no offensive smell in the room—this was in September.

"I thought the room a very cheerless one—cheerless is the best term I could use; but if kept clean and dry, and warm, well calculated for the persons designed—for the reception of such persons, in a state of health, to be used as a sleeping apartment"—

Not for such paupers to live and die in.

"not so well suited for protracted sickness, because, if sick persons, one or more, were confined in it night and day, it would, in my opinion, be close and unwholesome. The place may be large enough, but it is too low."

This was the testimony of a gentleman called to prove the fitness of the place. Dr. Miller thought it was not too small for an establishment of this kind, and the mode of heating judicious and effective. Now, however, came the pinch to Dr. Miller:—

"Should it be in winter, and the external air at thirty-three degrees, it would be very desirable that the internal air should be kept up at least to fifty degrees, and for patients such as Lock and Dart to a higher temperature."

Now, at this period, he (the Bishop of Exeter) had a statement of the temperature at this time from an institution at Exeter where a register was kept; whence it appeared that one day it was from twenty to twenty-five degrees; another day from twenty-eight to thirty-four degrees; another from twenty-nine to thirty-three degrees. This was the medical testimony, a class of evidence by itself. This protracted inquiry was brought to a close after no less than fifteen days of sitting—not consecutive days, but days of actual sitting; and when it came to a close many witnesses had not been examined. He was not surprised that the patience of the commissioners had been exhausted, but many of the witnesses who could speak to the facts had not been summoned, and it was a mere excuse to say that there was so many witnesses for the complainants that the inquiry would be endless, as more witnesses were heard for the defence than for the complaint. The inquiry closed on the 17th, and then there came a report from the commissioners, in which they gave a most entire acquittal to all the parties concerned. They said:—

"The Poor-law Commissioners having most carefully examined the evidence taken on the recent inquiry at Crediton, and the information communicated by the assistant-commissioners, are entirely satisfied that, as respects the treatment of the deceased paupers, Lock and Dart, there is not the slightest ground for complaint, direct or indirect, against the board of guardians; but that, on the contrary, the arrangements made for the care and management of those patients are creditable proofs of the attention and solicitude of the guardians with respect to them; and that, as regards the master of the workhouse, he has performed the extremely difficult and anxious task of taking care of those patients with discretion and humanity." "The commissioners have to add, that they are on the eve of completing a document containing a detailed expression of their opinions on the various charges which formed the subjects of the inquiry, which they propose to transmit to the guardians, and to which the commissioners will, if the guardians deem it advisable, give the fullest publicity."

In answer to this, the board of guardians stated that they felt it to be advisable that the utmost publicity should be given to this detailed statement, and a letter from Mr. Chadwick, the secretary to the Poor-law commissioners, said that there was no objection to the publication of the detailed documents relative to the different subjects, and to giving the utmost publicity to them, which the board of guardians stated to be the best course. Now, after what he had said, what he was about to mention would appear to their Lordships more surprising. Whether there had been any vexatious proceeding on the part of Mr. Tanner or not, he (the right rev. Prelate) did not know; whether there had been or not, at least there had been a voluntary offer on the part of the commissioners to give this detailed statement to the guardians, and to allow it to be printed for the satisfaction of the public. Would their Lordships believe it,—although the document was sent to the board of guardians,—notwithstanding that it was the wish of the guardians that it should be made public, when the document came, it was, at the express desire of the board of commissioners in London, returned to them; there was no publication, and not even a copy was permitted to be taken. Whilst he acquitted those gentlemen of any deliberate intention to do an act of injustice, still he thought that the power intrusted to their hands was too great to be confided to the commissioners; and that their conduct, the too sure result of placing unlimited power in the hands of any men, showed that such an extent of power ought to be withdrawn from them. If their Lordships should reject, as inconvenient, the proposal of an inquiry by a committee up stairs into all these particulars,—if they should be unwilling to select parts of the case for inquiry, still he hoped their Lordships would not concur in the renewal of an act which placed such an unlimited, and, until this example, such an unprecedented extent of power in the hands of the commissioners.

Lord *Wharncliffe* was sure, that their Lordships would give her Majesty's Government credit for not wishing to resist any case which affected the interests of the public or the character of the Poor-law Commissioners, if they thought a case could be made against them. He was very far from saying, that there were not in this case some circumstances which ought not to have occurred, and he should not spare those persons to whom this remark applied. But before he entered upon the defence of the Poor-law Commissioners, he must say, that called upon as they were to perform a most invidious and odious duty, one which often ran counter to the feelings of humanity, there was great danger of imputing to them unjustly blame which was not borne out by the facts. In all cases of accusation against any party, one of the first subjects of inquiry, was the circumstances under which the accusation was made; the next, the conduct of the party who made the accusation; whether his own hands were clean, and there was any evidence of contrivance to support a case; whether it were made from a desire to see justice done, or from a wish to render himself notorious. The conduct of Mr. Tanner satisfied him, that one of that gentleman's objects, whatever might be the merits of the case, was to gain notoriety. In the first place, the transaction itself, be the merits what they might, occurred two years ago, and, notwithstanding there had been two inquiries into it, ending in September, 1840, this had been the first time that anything had been said of it, either in that or the other House of Parliament. If the conduct of the commissioners had been such as was represented, the House of Commons was open to the gentleman, where he might have had the subject investigated; but it so happened that, until now, when it was likely that a New Poor-law Bill would be introduced, he had not brought forward this case, in order (he did not say it was improper on his part) to show that things were done by the commissioners which ought to make their Lordships (as the rev. Prelate had said) cautious how they granted to them extensive powers. He had said, that this gentleman had slept upon this matter from September, 1840, up to the present time. But that was not all. On the 2nd of May, 1840, he wrote a letter to the chairman of the board of guardians. That letter, was deliverd to the board when the chairman was not present. He (Lord Wharncliffe) was not surprised that the board, receiving such a letter directed to their chairman, postponed its consideration till the chairman was present. He agreed with the right rev. Prelate, that it would have been more courteous if the board had replied to it, merely acknowledging the receipt of the letter, and stating that the chairman's notice would be called to it. On the other hand, the letter being written on the 2nd, and although the writer knew that the chairman was not present on that day, before any other meeting of the guardians took place, he wrote another letter to the Poor-law Commissioners in London. No answer to this letter could possibly be received before the 8th, and on the 9th he published, in the Exeter newspaper, an article which became the subject of a prosecution for libel. Was this the conduct of a man anxious for a real inquiry into the case? He had waited from the 31st of January to the 8th of April; why could he not wait till the next board-day? If not, why should he, before it was possible that he could receive an answer from the commissioners, why should he have written an inflammatory article in a newspaper which subjected it to a prosecution? It was singular that neither in his statement in the newspaper, nor in his own petition, nor in his letter to the commissioners, did he state an important fact in the case—namely, what these poor men were—one an idiot, the other subject to epileptic fits, and that both of them were insensible to the calls of nature. But he talked of the place as a mere outhouse, and as if no attention was paid to it. Why, the evidence of the medical gentlemen do not treat it so; they speak of it as the "idiot ward," and as proper for such persons, and not as it was represented in the newspaper. He must say, that, under the circumstances, supposing a statement of this had been transmitted to the commissioners, and they sent down an assistant-commissioner (as they did forthwith), and he found there was no truth in the statement, he could not understand how it could be said, that there had not been immediate inquiry. What took place afterwards? The guardians were not satisfied with the examination, and determined to prosecute the editor of the newspaper for a libel, and they moved for a rule for a criminal information in the Court of Queen's Bench. The editor showed cause, and employed Mr. Tanner as his attorney, and the first thing done by his counsel (who must have consulted Mr. Tanner) was to take a technical objection, which upset the whole proceeding. If he wanted an inquiry, why should he have done that? He might have had a fair inquiry, and before a jury. But, no; that would not suit Mr. Tanner. After that, Mr. Woolmer conveyed to the commissioners his brief, and with the brief the affidavits which Mr. Tanner had prepared for showing cause against the rule. The moment the commissioners saw the brief and affidavits, they felt that further inquiry was necessary, and they sent down assistant-commissioners to make the inquiry. A great deal had been said about this inquiry, and it had been said, that this could not be an impartial inquiry; but it was never meant to be an impartial inquiry. The Act of Parliament gave power to the commissioners to swear witnesses; but that was only, he apprehended, to satisfy them whether a criminal offence had really been committed; and if so, under the sanction of the Government, it would be the duty of the commissioners to prosecute. The inquiry of the commissioners was in order to get information, not to convict of crime. It had been said, and it was perfectly true, that it would be better if such inquiry could be conducted in the way of a trial before a jury, and he hoped that in the bill which would come before their Lordships, some means might be devised of giving to the commissioners the means of substantial inquiry. But the right rev. Prelate had complained of the conduct of Mr. Gilbert, in calling upon Mr. Tanner to give evidence merely on the ground of his having made the affidavit. Now, if Mr. Tanner had thought fit to go out of his way to make an affidavit, it was proper that he should be called upon to give evidence before the court, and be cross-examined on the points. If the commissioners had thought it right to do this, and if Mr. Tanner had said, "I wish to conduct the case, but you shut my mouth by making me give evidence," he thought they did not exercise a wise discretion in not allowing him to do so. But this was a mere preliminary examination. Now as to Mr. Parker; he had instructions, by which it was intended to admit evidence on both sides. First of all what happened? They met, and when they met (their Lordships would find) there were two statements of what took place, and very different statements they were. Mr. Tanner stated, that his advocate, Mr. Furlong, was prevented from making his speech. The commissioners said, that Mr. Furlong abused the Poor-law Commissioners, and excited the people, and that when they called the first witness he applied very strong terms, both to the Poor-law Commissioners and the assistant-commissioners and pronounced the whole to be a farce. Now he, (Lord Wharncliffe) well knew, from experience, that persons placed on a bench of justice had great need to keep their temper, and learn patience, otherwise they got themselves into most undignified positions. He confessed, he believed, that these commissioners did not sufficiently preserve their patience and temper; and under the influence of their feelings they said, "We will not sit in public any longer, but will retire to another room." He must say, however, that Mr. Tanner and Mr. Furlong had no right to call the examination a farce; in fact, they began by calling it a farce. They ought to have waited to see its real character. Then they demanded a public examination, although they had refused to go into a public examination before the Queen's Bench, and had run off upon a technical objection. Now, it was very easy to irritate by means of demands of this kind. Perhaps their object was to irritate. However, the commissioners refused to conduct the examination in public, and went into a private room. The board of guardians like very honest men, wishing the whole of their conduct laid before the world, were anxious that the investigation should be taken in public; finding this refused, they resigned. Now, he was free to say that, according to his opinion, and contrary to the opinion of the assistant-commissioners, this very expression of opinion on the part of a respectable body should have prevailed with them to revise their decision; that they should have returned into the public room, and let Mr. Tanner and Mr. Furlong attack them and abuse them, and call the whole proceedings a farce, as much as they liked. The right rev. Prelate had stated a part only of the evidence—in this using his own discretion—the evidence, namely, of the medical officers; and he must observe, that the evidence of the medical persons showed that the statements in the newspapers, and the original statement in the Exeter paper, were not the truth. In them it was stated, that the room was an outhouse, that it was cold, and that the air was impure, and that the two paupers died of neglect. Now, it was clear that this was not the truth. The room was not an outhouse; it was no such thing; it was a room prepared for lunatic patients, nearly in the condition of these persons. The statements to which he referred admitted, however, that there had been a scheme for warming the place, and it was quite clear, by the evidence and by the test of experience, that the room was sufficiently warm, and that the mode of warming it was an exceedingly good one. Then the newspaper accounts talked of the impurity of the place. Now, he thought that it was not very wonderful that when the friends of these parties went in to see them, lying in the state they were in, the air should be impure. They were in that condition that the air must of necessity have been impure, and he had no doubt that at that time the air was impure; but, subsequently, when these persons were not in the place, the air of the place was not impure. That appeared on the evidence. Now with respect to the ceiling and the cold, and the assertion that there were too many apertures and that it was too cold, he could only say, that all this was not the fact, but that the place was just such a place as is used for persons in that state in which those persons were, and that considerable pains had been taken to make it so. There were other exaggerations in the statement. It was said, that these persons were locked in, and that the place was a detached outhouse; but the fact was not so, there was no locking in; and, moreover, the room was connected with the rest of the building by a passage and outer room. Then there was also a story about an offensive smell from the privy. Now, he would say at once that on the evidence with respect to the situation of the one place and the other he could not believe it. It was not credible that the impurity of the air could have arisen from them. But passing from this, he must observe, that in glancing over that part of the petition of Mr. Tanner in which he spoke of the prosecution in the Queen's Bench, it struck him, as very curious that that Gentleman insinuated that the other side had made a technical fault on purpose, in order that it might be taken up by him. What, then, did their Lordships think that persons would go to the trouble and expense of bringing up witnesses and preparing evidence, and then make technical faults, in order that all this expense might be rendered of no avail? The circumstance did, he confessed he felt, cast upon Mr. Tanner's petition something of a nature to take away credit from his statements. The right rev. Prelate had quoted a passage from a letter of the commissioners addressed to the guardians to the effect that they would publish the evidence. Now, since the right rev. Prelate spoke, he (Lord Wharncliffe) had had the advantage of learning, by inquiry, that the commissioners wished to publish the evidence, and sent down to the guardians to say so, but the guardians refused to consent to make it public for reasons best known to themselves, and would not be at the expense of it. But there was another allegation of a circumstance which, if it had occurred, would he admitted, have furnished a most pregnant and irresistible proof of the partiality of the commissioners. The petitioners stated, that the witnessess for the defence and for the charge, had been paid for their expenses in different ratios. Now, he had before him a list of the payments made to all witnesses according to their respective grades and occupations, by which it appeared that there was one rate allowed for lawyers and another for labourers, and so on; that labourers had 2*s*. a day as compensation for their loss of time, and women had 1*s*. 8*d*. a day. Such was the scale of compensation uniformly observed, and this statement, therefore, was wholly false. Now, he said that this tainted the petition and destroyed its credit, and that although there were parts of the proceedings in which he certainly did not concur in the judgment of the commissioners, he thought that the case had been got up by Mr. Tanner from motives which he (Lord Wharncliffe) did not wish to particularise; and that with respect to the commissioners although they had made what he considered to be mistakes, yet that they had not shown any disposition to screen any one in any part of the case.

Lord *Campbell* could assure the right rev. Prelate that Mr. Tanner had enjoyed the most ample opportunity for having the whole facts of this case gone into in public in the Court of Queen's Bench. The petition stated, that the defendant "intentionally or unintentionally" made a flaw in the proceedings. Now, he could assure the right rev. Prelate and the House, that the case was not so. The rule was granted on reading the affidavits and the newspaper which was annexed to them. In copying the officer omitted the words "on reading the affidavits and newspaper" owing to a blot, or something of that sort, and on the objection being taken, as it appeared to the court that the rule without these words was defective, such rules being always drawn up with them inserted, they felt bound to discharge the rule. Now, the objection, let it be remembered, was taken voluntarily on the part of Mr. Tanner; he (Lord Campbell) knew not whether Mr. Tanner was in court at the time or not; but the objection could not have been taken without his consent and sanction. It was taken, and the court was bound to act upon it. It was, therefore, most improper for Mr. Tanner now to come forward, and to say that this technical flaw had been made on purpose. Had the case come on, the court would have heard the affidavits on both sides, and on the whole they would have given the case a much more satisfactory investigation than could be had for it elsewhere.

The Bishop of *Exeter* would frankly say, that he was a little surprised that the noble Lord, whose wish it must have been, and whose duty it was, as he said to defend the commissioners, had deserted this case, and that he principally dwelt on a point which he (the Bishop of Exeter) thought of very little importance—the demerits namely, of Mr. Tanner. Now, he (the Bishop of Exeter) said nothing about the merits or demerits of Mr. Tanner; be they demerits or merits, they did not weigh with him. The Poor-law commissioners had departed from their duty—grossly departed—and shown themselves thereby to be unfit to be intrusted with the enormous power with which it had pleased Parliament to invest them. The noble Lord said, that the deaths of these parties took place two years ago; and he asked, how it was they had never heard of the case before. He (the Bishop of Exeter) would tell their Lordships. In the year 1840 no proceedings could be taken before either Houses of Parliament, because the investigation before the commissioners was not brought to a close within that year. That was the case in 1840. Then with respect to 1841. He could answer for Mr. Tanner that he was most anxious that this case should be brought before Parliament about the time that they were called upon to give the commissioners a prolongation of their power for another period of five years, and he had no hesitation in saying that he had advised Mr. Tanner to put off presenting his petition until the time when Parliament would have to consider whether this much-abused (as Mr. Tanner believed) power should be continued. As to the Queen's Bench, he (the Bishop of Exeter) cared not whether Mr. Tanner might have had his rule or not, and he cared not what were his motives, or whether they were or were not as base and insiduous as the noble Lord supposed; but he believed Mr. Tanner to be a man of honour, who was incapable of having any such motives as had been so plentifully attributed to him. But to what object were inquiries under these commissioners ostensibly directed?—what was it intended they were to do? Why, to find out whether there was a case for animadversion or other interference on the part of commissioners above, who ought to interfere in all cases in order to prevent any violation of the law. But what did the commissioners do? Did they think it enough to inquire? No, they gave a judicial character entirely to the proceedings. They stated that, with respect to the death of Lock and Dart, there was not the slightest imputation on the board of guardians, and that as for the master of the workhouse, he had discharged the arduous duty of taking due care and attention of these persons with credit to himself. Now, he (the Bishop of Exeter) asked what decision could partake more of a judicial character; or how could there be a more formal judgment? But did the matter end here? No. The commissioners gave authority for the publication of the correspondence, in order, apparently, to irritate the public mind still more. He said, therefore, that the commissioners, whatever Parliament might have intended, had, in this case, assumed judicial power, and they were bound, therefore, to exercise it with all the calmness and impartiality that properly belonged to judicial power. He had heard part of the speech of the noble Lord (Lord Wharncliffe), he must confess, with pain. The right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government had last year humanely declared that the commissioners ought to stand between the poor and the guardians, in order to see justice done them, considering at the same time, how the guardians were brought into contact with them. If that was the case, then the commissioners were in the right to judge and to pronounce judgment; but then they were bound to proceed in a just and judicial manner. He would not then go into the question of the treatment of the paupers, or the character of the House, or other particulars, although he might be allowed to say, that part of the noble Lord's citation of evidence, which went to show that everything about the room in which these persons were confined was in a proper state, had been contradicted; indeed, it was chiefly owing to these contradictions, which had been made so confidently, that he had not quoted any part of the evidence but the medical evidence. When the noble Lord said that no experiment had been made to ascertain the state of the atmosphere in the room, he had not made a correct statement. There had been an experiment made, and that by Mr. Tucker, who said,

> "I am now trying an experiment on it,"

That was the stove in this room,

> "I introduced a thermometer into the room about one o'clock in the day; which then stood at sixty-six degrees Fahrenheit; and at four o'clock it was raised to seventy-four degrees Fahrenheit."

["Lord *Wharncliffe*, hear."] The noble Lord cried "hear," but he (the Bishop of Exeter) begged the noble Lord to hear him to the end. Mr. Tucker went on to say that,

> "During the interval between one and four o'clock, the stove had been made red hot; however, the alteration of the atmosphere was not in fact attributable to this, as at the Exeter Institution, where there was no fire, the thermometer, at the same time stood at seventy-eight degrees."

That was only seven miles from Crediton; he thought the noble Lord was presuming too much when he attributed the increased heat of the atmosphere from sixty-six to seventy-four degrees to the operation of this stove. But it was positively sworn to, in the course of the evidence, that no fire was in the stove during the day when these poor wretches died. That evidence stood, if not uncontradicted yet unshaken. Every charge of disingenuousness against Mr. Tanner, sank into nothing before the monstrous disingenuousness of the board of guardians at Crediton, in concealing from the public the opinion of the Poor-law commissioners on the various charges against them. He felt himself bound to defend Mr. Tanner in bringing this case before their Lordships; but if their Lordships were of opinion that Mr. Tanner had misconducted himself, that imputation rested on him. The more ingenuity the noble Lord had shown in defending the Poor-law commissioners, the more plainly he (the Bishop of Exeter) was convinced that no real answer had been given or could be given to the complaint made in the petition.

Petition to lie on the Table.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, February 24, 1842.

Minutes.] **Bills.** *Public*—1°· Marriages (Ireland). *Private.*—1°· Gt. North of England Railway; Weston-super-Mare Improvement; Duke of Bedford's Estate; St. Pancras Improvement; Boston Harbour.
2°· Severn Navigation.

Petitions Presented. By Sir R. Bateson, from Keady, and Strabane, Mr. Ffolliot, from Sligo, Lord Acheson, from Moira, and Lord Claude Hamilton, from Temple Patrick, for Legalizing Marriages by Dissenters.—By Mr. Brotherton, from Salford, Mr. Busfeild, from Bradford, Mr. Duncan, from Dundee, Mr. Oswald, from Glasgow, and several other hon. Members, from various places, for the Repeal of the Corn-laws.—By Mr. Divett, from Exeter, against the Municipal Corporations Act Amendment Bill.—By Sir R. Inglis, from Societies at Glasgow, for Assistance to Emigrate.—By Mr. Borthwick, from Pimlico, and Mr. Broadwood, from St-George's, Hanover-square, and other Districts of the Metropolis, for the Redemption of the Tolls on the Metropolitan Bridges.—By Mr. Greenall, from Wigan, for Extending the Provisions of the Metropolitan Police Act to the Rural Districts.—From Lord Mayor, &c. of London, complaining of Smoke from Factories.—From James Haughton, against raising Revenue from Spirits.—From Carlisle, for Enquiry into Distress there.

Riot in Jamaica.] Mr. *O'Connell* would take that opportunity to ask a question of the noble Lord opposite on the subject to which he had yesterday evening called the noble Lord's attention. It appeared that an unfortunate occurrence, in which several lives were lost, had taken place in Jamaica on Christmas-eve, or on the night of Christmas day last. He begged, therefore, to know from the noble Lord, whether he had received from Jamaica the particulars of that occurrence, and, if he had, whether he had any objection to lay the information so obtained on the Table.

Lord *Stanley* said, it was proper that he should state to the House that information had been received by her Majesty's Government on the subject referred to, and he would explain to the House what the nature of that information was. It was quite true, that during the Christmas holydays, the event alluded to had occurred in Kingston, and unfortunately some lives were lost. The House were aware that the common practice had been for the negroes to have a sort of saturnalia at Christmas, in all the great towns in the

West Indies. The planters approved of these amusements, and liked to see the negroes thus employed, because, while they were occupied in this manner, they were not likely to combine for improper purposes. These celebrations were, however, very noisy, and some of the inhabitants therefore objected to them. He here spoke of a period when slavery existed. Since slavery had ceased, however, it had been the earnest desire of the white inhabitants, and of the more respectable negroes themselves, to put a stop gradually to these noisy and troublesome demonstrations. In the year before last the mayor of Kingston, exercising his own discretion, without the consent of the rest of the corporation, and contrary to the advice of the Government, took strong measures to put an end to these proceedings. A disturbance broke out at last, and the rioters having overpowered the authorities, the district was kept in a state of disturbance for the space of three weeks. In the course of last year the mayor of Kingston, in spite of the remonstrances of the Government availing himself of a clause in an Act of Parliament (the construction of which was doubtful), determined under the authority which he supposed that clause conferred on him, to put down those proceedings at Kingston by main force. The consequence was that a riot took place, the police were resisted in endeavouring to carry into effect those orders which they were bound to obey, and much confusion and alarm ensued. The mayor was struck on the face with a stone, he was knocked down and treated with very great violence. The riot at length reached so great a height, that the police, feeling themselves to be in the most imminent danger, fired on the people. Two individuals were killed on the spot, two had died since, and a considerable number were wounded. It then became necessary to call out the troops, of whom a considerable body occupied the town during several days. Considerable excitement prevailed, the guards were doubled, and every precaution adopted necessary to the preservation of the peace. He was happy to be able to add that nothing could be better or more moderate and forbearing than had been the conduct of every description of troops. It was a circumstance worthy of remark that the few troops engaged were exclusively blacks, and that nothing could be better than their conduct. Indeed, the military of all colours had acted with the greatest zeal and readiness, and at the same time with the greatest forbearance. Not a single shot was fired nor a single life lost after the first unfortunate firing took place. He had that morning seen Sir W. Gomm, who had stated to him that the governor Sir C. Metcalfe, in order to allay the excitement, had ordered that there should be an investigation before three magistrates, which investigation had commenced before Sir W. Gomm left, and further, that tranquillity had since been entirely restored. He hoped by the next packet to receive a full account of the inquiry that took place at that public investigation, and until he received that report he thought it would be much better for him not to lay any papers of a partial nature before the House. When he received the report he should be prepared to communicate its contents to the fullest extent.

Mr. *O'Connell* under those circumstances would not, of course, press the noble Lord. He had understood the noble Lord to say, that the governor had been adverse on both occasions to the proceedings which took place; and he understood him also to say, that the persons conducting the inquiry had been appointed by the governor.

Lord *Stanley* said, that the imprudence and indiscretion of the mayor had been disapproved of by the governor, and that the question of his independence of the authority of the governor had been, or was about to be, brought under the consideration of the legislature of the island.

Subject at an end.

EXCHEQUER-BILLS.] The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* rose to move for certain papers relative to Exchequer-bills. The right hon. Gentleman said that as the returns he moved for contained an account of the number of Exchequer-bills signed by the Comptroller-general and his assistant, they would no doubt render unnecessary the motion of which the hon. Member for Lincoln had given notice.

Colonel *Sibthorp* said, until he knew what the papers were he could not withdraw his notice, which he thought was a necessary one, in order that they might get at the truth; for it appeared by the report of the commissioners, that the Exchequer-bills had, contrary to the provisions of the act of Parliament, been signed in places other than the Exchequer-bill office. They had a right to inquire into the truth of this statement, and to have so important a matter brought fully before the public, because it might happen that condemnation would fall upon really guilty persons, who had now escaped.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that in laying the papers on the Table of the House, he must express his opinion that they would contain all the information the hon. and gallant Gentleman wished. He believed that those papers would contain everything essential to the consideration of the subject. He had not the least wish to withhold anything from the House in this matter, and if the hon. and gallant Member's motion had come on, and he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) had thought it his duty to resist it, he should have been acting in direct opposition to the wish of the Comptroller-general himself. He hoped the hon. and gallant Colonel would first look at the papers, when laid on the Table, and, when he had seen them, if he did not feel satisfied, he could give notice of a motion on a future day.

Lord *J. Russell* said, the hon. Member had made a statement to which considerable importance would attach, had it been made in a shape demanding attention. Undoubtedly, if it could be proved that Exchequer-bills had been signed in places other than the Exchequer-office, a direct violation of the act of Parliament would be shown to have been committed; but he (Lord J. Russell) did not think the hon. Gentleman would be able in any way to prove his statement.

Colonel *Sibthorp* had made the statement on the authority of the Comptroller-general of the Exchequer himself.

WEST INDIES.] Mr. *Grantley Berkeley* rose to put questions to the noble Lord the Secretary for the Colonies; first, if the Government had received despatches containing the news of a general strike in Demerara of the negroes, because the proprietors had endeavoured to substitute a fair average of wages, in place of the present exorbitant demand? He begged the noble Lord to observe that he confined his question to the strike of the negroes, because he had been informed that the Portuguese emigrants remained steady and contented—a fact speaking highly in favour of the importation system. Also, he was anxious to know if the Government had received a memorial from the West India body in London, praying to have an inquiry by committee into the present depressed state of colonial property, and if the memorial to which he referred included British Guiana as well as the West India colonies?

Lord *Stanley* said, that the Government had received no information of the nature referred to by the hon. Gentleman. The latest accounts from Demerara were dated the 5th January, and had been received the 16th of the present month. They contained no accounts of the nature referred to. With respect to the second question the Government had received the memorial to which the hon. Gentleman referred, and it did include the colony of Demerara. He had not had an opportunity of seeing the gentleman from whom it came, but hoped to be able to do so in a day or two.

CORN AVERAGES.] Mr. *W. S. O'Brien* wished to know whether the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government had any objection to state, for the information of the corn trade, whether, on the passing of his bill, the averages of the six weeks immediately preceding would be made use of, or whether the operation of the bill was to be deferred until averages had been taken in the new manner for six weeks.

Sir *R. Peel* begged to postpone answering the question until the details of his bill were before the House.

DISSENTERS' MARRIAGES (IRELAND).] Lord *Eliot* rose to move for leave to bring in a bill to confirm certain marriages in Ireland, and he apprehended that it would not be necessary for him to use much argument to induce the House to consent to a measure to relieve a large number of her Majesty's subjects who had contracted matrimonial engagements in perfect good faith, and according to what they believed to be the law of the land. For the last two centuries it had been usual for Presbyterian ministers to solemnize marriages where the one party was a Presbyterian and the other a member of the Church of England; and he need not describe the dismay of those persons who were so situated when they found, from circumstances that had recently happened, that their marriages were illegal. A short statement of these circumstances might assist those hon. Members not already acquainted with them in deciding upon the measure he was about to propose. At the last summer assizes at Armagh, a person named Smith was indicted for bigamy. It appeared that in the year 1830, being then a member of the Church of England, he had been married to a Presbyterian by a Presbyterian minister. They lived together as man and wife nine years, and in 1839 he remarried according to the rites of the Church of England, in a parish church in Dublin, a member of the Established Church. He was tried for bigamy, and his counsel contended that his client was entitled to an acquittal, he being a member of the Established Church, and the marriage having been celebrated by a Presbyterian minister. Counsel for the Crown contended that the marriage was valid, and that it was not necessary that the person celebrating it should be in holy orders, neither counsel contending that within the meaning of the act a Presbyterian minister was a person in holy orders. The objection of the prisoner's counsel was overruled, but the learned judge reserved the point of law for the consideration of the judges. On the first day of Hilary Term there was a meeting of the judges, before whom the case was elaborately argued, and the decision come to by a majority of eight to two, there being ten judges present, was, that the conviction was bad, as the former marriage was invalid. It would be presumptuous in him to offer any opinion on the subject, but this he might be permitted to say, that until the opinion of the judges was overruled by the decision of the supreme tribunal, before which there was no means of bringing it, it being a criminal case, they were bound to regard the decision of the judges as the law of the land. There was no doubt that the law of marriages in Ireland rested upon a bad and unsatisfactory footing. Marriages by Presbyterian ministers between persons of their own communion were done in a very irregular manner. There were none of those checks which distinguish marriages between members of the Church of England; no notice was required; neither a particular time nor place was necessary; there was no limit as to the persons; and the ceremony was not unfrequently celebrated by degraded ministers. It was, therefore, absolutely necessary that the whole subject should undergo consideration. The course proposed by her Majesty's Government seemed to be the only one open to them to pursue, namely, to bring in a measure such as he was about to lay upon the Table, for the purpose of giving relief to those parties who were affected by the decision of the judges, and subsequently, in the present Session, to give to the whole subject the most serious consideration with the view to some final and satisfactory settlement. The noble Lord moved for leave to bring in a "Bill to legalize Marriages which have been solemnized in Ireland by Presbyterian Ministers between Presbyterians and members of the Church of England."

Mr. *Litton* had received numerous communications from the Presbyterians of Ireland, since the intention of Government to bring in this bill had been announced, expressive of their anxiety on the subject, and their gratitude to the Government for so earnest a consideration of a question of such importance to their interests. They also felt especially grateful for the promise which had been given of a retrospective measure. In the north of Ireland, in particular, such a measure would prove most useful and satisfactory.

Mr. *O'Connell* said, there could be no doubt that the class of persons to be affected by the bill of the noble Lord had the strongest possible claim for relief. They married with the full conviction that the marriage was legal, and so far from its having been suspected not to have been so previous to the recent decision, that he would not have hesitated giving it as his opinion that they were perfectly valid. He said this to show that those parties were exculpated from any intention to violate the law by contracting those marriages. He hoped the noble Lord would endeavour to have this bill passed as speedily as possible, because until it was passed it would be open to any of those for whose benefit it was intended to contract, if they were so inclined, a second marriage, and thus morally, though not legally, be guilty of bigamy. He was sure, therefore, that no obstacle whatever would be thrown in the way of the noble Lord's proceeding as speedily as possible with this measure. While on the subject, he must caution the noble Lord against interfering with the law of marriage in Ireland beyond what was absolutely necessary. In England the Marriage-law was exceedingly strict; in Ireland it was partially strict and partially not so; in Scotland there was great latitude; and the House having already, on a former occasion, discussed the question as regarded another class of her Majesty's subjects in Ireland, he hoped the noble Lord would approach the subject with great caution.

Colonel *Rawdon* stated, that on the 26th of last January a woman, with four children, applied for admission into the workhouse of Armagh, alleging that her husband, who had lived with her for fourteen years, had deserted her in consequence of the decision of the judges alluded to by the noble Lord, and that having married a female in another quarter, her children had since then been designated bastards. This circumstance having taken place on the 26th of January, he could not join with the hon. Member for Coleraine in expressions of gratitude to the Government, for he conceived that they had been very tardy in taking that course which common sense as well as humanity dictated. He thought it was the duty of her Majesty's Government to have laid this bill on the Table of the House the very first day of the Session.

Mr. Serjeant *Jackson* said, the Government had introduced this measure upon the very first opportunity, consistently with a due consideration of the subject. It was but a short time since the Parliament had assembled, and some little time was required for deliberation. The very fact mentioned by the hon. and gallant Colonel proved and showed the necessity of having the present measure one only of a retrospective nature; for, if it were made prospective, the man who he said had abandoned his wife, and married again, would necessarily be made guilty of bigamy.

Mr *F. Maule* thought that the Government had been remiss in not bringing this question forward at the opening of the Session. The time since might be short, but nevertheless many such instances as that mentioned by the hon. and gallant Officer might, in that short period, have taken place. As connected with the Presbyterians of Scotland, he was glad the Government had taken up the question; and while he regretted they had not done so sooner, he hoped they would lose no time with the present bill, but proceed with it *de die in diem*.

Leave given.—Bill brought in and read a first time.

STRANGERS IN THE GALLERY.] Mr. *Muntz* moved, "That at future divisions of this House, neither the strangers in the Gallery nor the reporters shall be required to withdraw, except by special motion for for that purpose."

The *Speaker*, before putting the question, begged to observe to the hon. Member, that he could hardly put the motion without the standing order relative to strangers being rescinded. If the hon. Member wished, he might move that the standing order be rescinded before putting the motion.

Mr. *Muntz* stated, that he would avail himself of the suggestion of the Speaker.

The standing orders were then read by the Clerk as follows:—

"Ordered, that the Sergeant-at-arms attending this House do, from time to time, take into his custody any stranger or strangers that he shall see, or be informed of, to be in the House or Gallery, while the House, or any committee of the whole House, is sitting; and that no person so taken into custody be discharged out of custody without the special order of the House.

"Ordered, That no Member of this House do presume to bring any stranger or strangers into the House or gallery thereof, while the House is sitting."

Mr. *Muntz* moved that these orders be rescinded.

Sir *R. Peel* stated that his vote on this occasion would be determined by a sense of the public convenience. They ought not, in his opinion, to vary lightly that which was an old practice and established usage of the House. There ought to be some strong case of public inconvenience established to induce them to depart from that which had been established. Of late years there was even less reason than formerly for strangers remaining in the gallery; for now, whatever were the votes given by the Members, the surest plan had been adopted by the House of notifying them to the public. By the publication of the name of each Member, and how he had voted, the fact material to the public to know was ascertained. If they were to lay down a rule on this subject, it ought to be an uniform one, and declare that strangers had a right to be there during the debates as well as during the divisions. If they did do so, great inconvenience might be occasioned to the House, for it frequently happened that the places allotted to strangers were required for the Members themselves, and he believed that if the proposed change took place, the division lists could not be so satisfactorily made out as at present. If strangers were to remain during the divisions, the confidence now felt in the accuracy of their returns as to divisions would be much shaken. He could not conceive any good reason for making the alteration, and he therefore trusted that the House would adhere to the ancient practice.

Mr. *Aglionby* asked the right hon. Baronet whether it were not extremely absurd to retain on their standing orders that which was so contrary to the truth? It was said that Members should not bring strangers, and every day Members brought them in. While, too, these standing orders said that strangers were to be excluded, a part of the House was fitted up for strangers.

Mr. *Wallace* suggested that strangers might be allowed to remain in the gallery during divisions, and then, if any inconvenience were felt from the practice, they might return to the present system.

Dr. *Bowring* was sure no hon. Member could have heard the Standing Order read without blushing at the absurdity and mendacity of it; and he really thought it due to the character of the House to expunge it.

Mr. *Muntz* wished to observe, in reply, that the right hon. Baronet had misunderstood his motion. He had not said anything with regard to the strangers in the lower part of the House. There might be, he was quite aware, great difficulties attending a division if they were suffered to remain, but his motion merely referred to the occupants of the galleries, who could not in any way interfere with a division.

The House divided on the question that the said orders be rescinded—Ayes 51; Noes 187: Majority 136.

List of the AYES.

Adam, W.
Blake, Sir V.
Blewitt, R. J.
Bowes, J.
Bowring, Dr.
Bridgeman, H.
Brotherton, J.
Cobden, R.
Denistoun, J.
Duke, Sir J.
Duncan, G.
Duncombe, T.
Dundas, A. D.
Elphinstone, H. H.
Evans, W.
Fitzroy, Lord C.
Gibson, T. M.
Hill, Lord M.
Humphery, Mr. Ald.
Hutt, W.
Jardine, W.
Johnson, Gen.
Layard, Captain
Leader, J. T.
Mangles, R. D.
Marsland, H.
Martin, J.
Morris, D.
Murphy, F. S.
Murray, A.
O'Brien, W. S.
O'Connell, D.
Pechell, Captain
Pinney, W.
Plumridge, Captain
Powell, C.
Ramsbottom, J.
Redington, T. N.
Rice, E. R.
Somerville, Sir W. M.
Tancred, H. W.
Turner, E.
Wallace, R.
Wason, R.
Wawn, J. T.
White, S.
Williams, W.
Wilson, M.
Wood, B.
Wood, Sir M.
Worsley, Lord

TELLERS.

Muntz, G. F.
Aglionby, H.

List of the NOES.

Acton, Col.
Adderley, C. B.
Ainsworth, P.
Allix, J. P.
Antrobus, E.
Arkwright, G.
Bailey, J.
Bailey, J. jun.
Baillie, H. J.
Baldwin, C. B.
Balfour, J. M.
Baring, rt. hon. F. T.
Barnard, E. G.
Barneby, J.
Barrington, Visct.
Beckett, W.
Bell, M.
Beresford, Major
Bernard, Visct.
Blackstone, W. S.
Bodkin, W. H.
Boldero, H. G.
Borthwick, P.
Botfield, B.
Bradshaw, J.
Bramston, T. W.
Broadwood, H.
Brownrigg, J. S.
Bruce, Lord E.
Bruce, C. L. C.
Buckley, E.
Burdett, Sir F.
Burrell, Sir C. M.
Burroughes, H. N
Campbell, A.
Carnegie, hn. Capt.
Chapman, A.
Chelsea, Vscount
Clerk, Sir G.
Clive, hon. R. H.
Cochrane, A.
Codrington, C. W.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Colville, C. R.
Compton, H. C.
Copeland, Mr. Ald.
Corry, right hon. H.
Cresswell, B.
Darby, G.
Denison, E. B.
Dick, Q.
Divett, E.
Douglas, Sir H.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Drummond, H. H.
Duffield, T.
Duncombe, hon. O.
Du Pre, C. G.
Eaton, R. J.
Egerton, W. T.
Eliot, Lord
Escott, B.
Estcourt, T. G. B.
Farnham, E. B.
Fellowes, E.
Feilden, W.
Ferrand, W. B.
Filmer, Sir E.
Fitzroy, Captain
Fleming, J. W.
Follett, Sir W. W.
Ffolliott, J.
Forester, hon. G.C.W.
French, F.
Gladstone, rt. hn. W. E.
Gore, W. R. O.
Goring, C.
Goulburn, rt. hon. H.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Granby, Marquess of
Greenall, P.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Grimsditch, T.
Grogan, E.
Hale, R. B.
Halford, H.
Hamilton, W. J.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Hastie, A.
Hawes, B.
Hawkes, T.
Heneage, G. H. W.
Heneage, E.
Henley, J. W.
Hepburn, Sir T. B.
Hodgson, F.
Hodgson, R.
Houldsworth, T.
Holmes, hn. W. A'Ct.
Hope, A.
Howard, hon. G.
Hughes, W. B.
Irton, S.
Irving, J.

Jackson, J. D.
Johnson, W. G.
Johnston, A.
Johnstone, H.
Kelburne, Visct.
Kemble, H.
Labouchere, rt. hn. H.
Lambton, H.
Legh, G. C.
Lincoln, Earl of
Lindsay, H. H.
Litton, E.
Loch, J.
Long, W.
Lowther, J. H.
Lowther, hon Col.
Lygon, hon. General
MacGeachy, F. A.
Manners, Lord J.
March, Earl of
Martin, C. W.
Martyn, C. C.
Masterman, J.
Meynell, Colonel
Morgan, O.
Mostyn, hn. E. M. L.
Mundy, E. M.
Neville, R.
O'Brien, A. S.
Ossulston, Lord
Packe, C. W.
Palmer, G.
Palmerston, Visct.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Plumptre, J. P.
Pollock, Sir F.
Praed, W. T.
Pringle, A.
Protheroe, E.
Pusey, P.
Rae, rt. hon. Sir W.
Reid, Sir J. R.
Richards, R.
Rolleston, Col.
Rose, rt. hon. Sir G.
Round, C. G.
Rushbrooke, Col.
Russell, Lord J.
Ryder, hon. G. D.
Sanderson, R.
Sandon, Visct.
Scott, hon. F.
Seymour, Sir H. B.
Sheppard, T.
Shirley, E. J.
Shirley, E. P.
Sibthorp, Col.
Smythe, hon. G.
Smollett, A.
Somerset, Lord G.
Stanley, E.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Stuart, Lord J.
Stuart, W. V.
Strickland, Sir G.
Strutt, E.
Sturt, H. C.
Sutton, hon. H. M.
Tennent, J. E.
Thompson, Mr. Ald.
Trotter, J.
Tuite, H. M.
Vane, Lord H.
Vere, Sir C. B.
Waddington, H. S.
Welby, G. E.
Whitmore, T. C.
Winnington, Sir T. E.
Wodehouse, E.
Wood, C.
Wortley, hon. J. S.
Wyndham, Col.
Young, J.

TELLERS.

Fremantle, Sir T.
Baring, H.

COMPTROLLERSHIP OF THE EXCHEQUER.] Colonel *Sibthorp* rose to move for the following returns:—

"A return of the number of days on which Lord Monteagle, as Comptroller of the Exchequer, attended at the office of the Receipt of Exchequer, from the date of his appointment, the 9th of September, 1839, to the 5th day of January, 1842; also for a return of the number and the amount of the several Exchequer-bills signed and issued by Lord Monteagle himself, and the periods and places at which such bills have been severally signed and issued by him during the above period."

The hon. Member said, that when these returns were referred to in the earlier part of the evening, he certainly heard, with some surprise, the proposal made to him by the right hon. Gentleman, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He had felt it due to that right hon. Gentleman to submit this motion to him before bringing it before the House, and it was only yesterday morning that he laid it under his consideration. He then heard no expression of dissent, indeed he had received a suggestion on the subject of it from a Member of the Government—not from the Chancellor of the Exchequer certainly, but from the hon. Baronet, one of the Secretaries of the Treasury. Now, he must say, that he considered this question was one which ought not to be trifled with. He was partial to the present Government. He placed implicit confidence in the integrity, the manliness, and the talents of the right hon. Baronet, the First Lord of the Treasury; but still, partial as he was to this Government, he begged to say, that he was bound to no Government. He was an independent Member of that House. He had entered it—pledged to the constituents, who returned him, to preserve his independence inviolate, and independent he would remain whilst they continued to return him, whosoever might occupy the Ministerial benches. In the course he was now taking, he considered he was only doing his duty to the country. He felt, that the public ought to be satisfied on this matter. It was due to Lord Monteagle that they should be satisfied—it was due to the country—to the House—and he would add, to himself. To show that he was not trifling with the House, by making a frivolous motion, he would refer to the act which regulated the issue of Exchequer-bills. That act, among other provisions, laid it down that no bill should be signed out of the Exchequer-office. Now, he wanted to know how far that and other regulations had been complied with. If it were asked, what grounds he had for supposing they had been violated, he would refer to the source from which most information was gleaned—namely, the public papers. He would read to the House a passage in a paper of high repute, in which he had no interest either directly or indirectly, but which he looked to with great respect as an organ of public opinion, and a vehicle of correct information. He had heard of the *Morning Chronicle*, he had heard of the *Morning Post*, but the paper he looked to for correct reports of public proceedings was *The Times*—a paper of which he would say, that it gave more copious, elaborate, and correct details of the events of the day than any print that came under his notice. He would read to them an extract from the report in that paper, of the trial before Lord Abinger, in the Court of Exchequer, on the 18th of February, in the case of "the Bank of England *v.* Tomkins." Coming from such authority, the accuracy of the report was unquestionable, and the part of the report he should read would be an extract from Lord Monteagle's evidence in the course of his cross-examination by Mr. Erle. The report in *The Times* was as follows :—

> "Formerly, the seal and the screw-press used to be kept together, but they are separated now. The senior clerk numbers the blank bills, and the junior the counterfoil, unless one be absent, when both are numbered by one only. They ought certainly to be numbered by two separate clerks, and if not, it is a violation of the rules of the office. The junior clerk generally cuts the bills off; but it is immaterial, I should say, who did it. The bills are almost uniformly signed at the office in my room, but there are exceptions. It is not essential that they should be signed there. According to antecedent usage, the bills were sometimes signed in the country, often in various parts of London."

He believed that to be a violation of the act of Parliament. He hoped, that no objection would be made to let the public know how the affairs of the office were managed, what documents were signed, by whom they were signed, and in what place. Far be it from him to draw any unpleasant inference from the account he had read, or to surmise that they were signed in any improper place. Upon these grounds, he trusted that the House would not refuse the return. He thought, that his right hon. Friend, if it was not too much to expect from one so high in office towards an humble individual like himself, might have shown him the return for which he intended to move. If his right hon. Friend had done that, and if it had been possible for him in the discharge of his duty to give way, he was one of the last men in the House to have put the Government to any trouble, and he would willingly have yielded. He should bow to the opinion of the House, and had no wish whatever to put them to the trouble of a division. What he had done, arose solely from an anxious wish to discharge his duty to the public and his constituents. He begged, in conclusion, to submit to the House the motion he announced at the outset.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* cheerfully admitted, that his hon. Friend always acted in the House with a desire to do his duty, and if he had the misfortune to differ from those with whom he usually acted in public life, he did it from an honourable and upright motive. He was sure, his hon. Friend would feel, that if he had not agreed with him in any part of the course he had pursued, he was only acting in the same manner for which his hon. Friend claimed credit, in taking an independent part, and pursuing his own course, without any reflection on his hon. Friend, for the course he thought proper to follow. When he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) presented a return on the subject a short time since, he had suggested to his hon. Friend, that it might be better first to see the return laid on the Table, and then consider whether a motion of this kind was necessary. His hon. Friend had not thought fit to acquiesce in that recommendation. He had formerly stated to the House that objections might fairly be raised to the production of the accounts, and subsequently, he had thought it his duty to consult the Comptroller-general of the Exchequer on the power he had of giving the return, and the view he took of the propriety of giving it. The noble Lord who filled that office, distinctly stated to him, that as far as he was concerned, he was most anxious to give the return, and was desirous, that no impediment should be thrown in the way of granting any information which the hon. Gentleman wished to obtain. Balancing, then, these considerations, his own doubts whether the return could answer any useful purpose, and the desire of the noble Lord, that it should be presented to the House, he had come to the conclusion, that, on the whole, it would be better to give way to the wishes of the noble Lord. If he were to pursue a different course, it would lead to the impression, that there was something to be concealed, and under those circumstances, he should waive his intention to oppose the motion. He could never admit, however, that mere attendance at an office, was any test of the manner in which its duties were discharged, or that the number of hours during which a person sat in a particular room was a proof of zeal. On that ground, he should have been desirous of refusing the return, had it not been for the wishes of the noble Lord; but, under these circumstances, he should offer no opposition to the return moved for by his hon. Friend. It might be a matter of some difficulty to state the particular days on which the bills had been signed, but the noble Lord said, he was willing to take that trouble also, rather than afford any ground for the imputation of attempt at concealment. He wished his hon. Friend had merely moved for the return without offering any observations. The House was well aware, that the whole of the subject must come fully before it, when it would be discussed, and the case would be made perfectly known, but till that period arrived, whether Gentlemen took one view of the transaction or another, he thought it but fair, that those who by any means might be implicated in anything that had taken place, should be exempted from attacks, which might be made in ignorance of the real circumstances of the case. He, therefore, wished his hon. Friend had not accompanied his motion with the observations by which he had prefaced it, and he begged it to be believed, if he did not enter into details on the topic suggested by his hon. Friend, it was not from any desire of shrinking, on his own part, or on that of the noble Lord concerned, but from a wish not to take up the time of the House by entering prematurely on a subject which must soon come before it. With these observations he would express his assent to the motion.

Mr. *F. T. Baring* could not allow the motion to pass without expressing his sincere satisfaction that the right hon. Gentleman had felt it to be consistent with his public duty to agree to the motion. He felt this on general grounds, for he thought that in all these cases the more frank the communications made the more satisfactory was it to all parties. He felt it the more because there had been with reference to this matter a degree of mystery observed which appeared to him to be most unfortunate, both for the public and for individuals. He felt it still more from the sincere attachment and respect he had long cherished on both political and personal grounds to the noble Lord who was at the head of the office, and who he was sure would be glad to lay before the House any information that was required. He should endeavour to follow the example of the right hon. Gentleman in refraining from making any observations on this subject. He perfectly concurred with the right hon. Gentleman that the hon. Member would have done better not on this occasion to allude to any point of law to which he might think it necessary to call the attention of the House, and which could be discussed when the whole subject was considered. At the same time he was but doing justice to his noble Friend when he mentioned a fact of which the hon. Member who had read an extract from the report of the trial must be perfectly well aware—that his noble Friend, so far from having attempted to conceal anything relating to the transaction, had stated in his evidence that he never signed those bills at any other place than the Comptroller's-office. Whatever opinions the hon. Gentleman might have as to the legality of the practice of signing bills at some othe place, it was one which had before pre vailed in the Exchequer, and under Lord Grenville and Mr. Bedford it was the constant habit to sign at other places than the office. He spoke only as to the legality of the practice; he went no further. He would conclude with saying, that he thought it but fair that his noble Friend, as well as all others concerned, should be clear from any imputation or suspicion that there had been an attempt on his part to conceal anything, or to withhold any evidence that could throw light on the affair.

Colonel *Sibthorp* thought he had a right to state that he had made no charge whatever, direct or indirect, against Lord Monteagle. No one word had fallen from him which could possibly be considered as casting the slightest imputation on that Nobleman. With respect to the opinion expressed by his right hon. Friend, that he should have moved for the return without making any comments, if he had known that his right hon. Friend entertained that desire he would have been happy to consult his wishes.

Motion agreed to.

Corn-laws—Mr. Villiers's Motion—Total Repeal—Adjourned Debate—(Fifth Day).] Order of the Day read, and House in committee upon the Corn-laws.

Mr. *Johnston* said, that when he had read her Majesty's Speech, he conceived that the system of class legislation was to be at once and for ever abandoned by the Government, and that a measure would have been brought forward which would have had a tendency to promote the general prosperity of the country, and he consequently felt the more regret that a measure should have been introduced which went so far to support the system of class legislation as that which had been presented to the House—a proposition, as he believed, which would please no class of persons except the landowners. He appealed to the past to prove, that the interests of the merchants had been sacrificed to the Corn-laws—that the interests of the bankers had sustained great losses from the derangements in the monetary system consequent upon the operation of the Corn-laws—that the manufacturers had been obliged to lessen the number of those in their employment, and that the working classes had been deprived of employment, and obliged at the same time to pay double for their food—all in consequence of the Corn-laws. He regretted the mode in which hon. Members on the other side of the House had sometimes chosen to address hon. Members on the side which he occupied. They seemed to wish to excite one class against another, and to set different interests in opposition to each other, with the view to curb the progress of the extension of political rights. The manufacturers had been accused of being oppressors, and of having designs of reducing as much as possible the amount of wages which they paid. He denied the charge. He maintained, that it was the interest of the manufacturers to pay high wages. Their profits were never so high as when they were obliged to pay high wages; and if they had the choice of the manner in which to conduct their business, they would prefer paying high to paying low wages; for the former was always a clear proof of high profits, and low wages of the reverse. When wages were low, the state of the manufacturer was never prosperous. They were told, too, that manufacturers were protected, and that therefore agriculturists should be protected too. But he denied, that the manufacturers were in reality protected. It was true, that there was a duty upon the importation of cotton goods; but did any one think that, by that means, cotton manufactures were raised in value to the extent of the duty? How could manufactures be protected by a duty on imports, when the articles in question were exported? If the Prussian government were to impose a duty of 10*s*. per quarter on the import of wheat into Dantzic, did any one think that the value of wheat would be raised in Dantzic to the extent of 10*s*. a quarter? All would see that the affirmative of such a proposition was a gross fallacy—and that the idea of protection to the cotton manufacturer was just as complete a mistake; the manufacturers did not want protection, they only wanted justice, and that they were determined to have. They would take no protection from, and give no protection to, the landowners. He meant to vote for a total and immediate repeal of the Corn-laws. He would do so because he thought, that the agriculturists required no protection. The Scotch farmers required no protection. In the evidence taken before the agricultural committee of the House in 1836, many intelligent Scotch farmers said, that then no distress existed in the rural parts of their country, that the Corn-laws were not needed, and that low prices for grain were beneficial to the farmer, by compelling the landlord to assist with his capital in draining and improving land, in order to keep up his rents. It was calculated by some of the witnesses examined before the committee alluded to, that 48*s*. per quarter, by others that 50*s*. per quarter, and by others that 56*s*. per quarter, as the price of corn, would be remunerating prices. He was satisfied from the various returns made to the House, that wheat could not be imported under a charge of 50*s*. per quarter. He presumed now, this was a price which the Scotch farmers considered a remunerating one, and he would ask, why should not the English agriculturist be of the same opinion? Why did not the English agriculturist adopt the Scotch system of farming? Why should they continue a system under which they paid lower rents for a more fertile soil? He believed, that the Scotch farmers were correct in stating that low prices were the best improvers of the land. He had no hesitation in saying, if the same system of farming was adopted in England as that pursued in Scotland, that the same outlay of capital would raise a third greater extent of produce. The prosperity of the years 1835 and 1836 had, as the Member for Dorchester remarked on a former occasion, induced the manufacturers greatly to increase the extent of their works. From the appearance of things at the time, they thought that they were justified in making these extensions; but the operation of the Corn-laws, combined with other causes, had since produced that distress for which he had hoped the Government had intended to apply a remedy. He had hoped that Ministers would have gone deeply into the subject of the commercial laws—that they would have perceived that restrictive duties and monopoly were stifling the energies of the country. Why was not their foreign trade extended? The world was wide, and were there not millions who were not half clothed, while they were not half fed? Why were they prevented from exchanging the productions of different countries, to the mutual benefit of those countries? The monopolists prevented it. He had hoped that Government would have taken a more enlightened view of the subject. He fully believed that the country would benefit by a free-trade in corn, and under that impression, he would vote for a total and immediate repeal of the laws which prevented it.

Mr. *Villiers Stuart* would vote for the motion of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton. It seemed to be generally admitted that the Corn-laws were the cause of an increased price of food. It seemed then to him, that in giving a vote for the continuation of these laws, the deepest responsibility must be felt, and that nothing but a clear proof of positive advantages springing from them could justify such a step. He had been in his place during the discussion which had taken place upon the subject; he had considered the arguments of the hon. Gentlemen who had defended the Corn-laws; and it seemed to him that the point which they sought to gain was the maintenance of the cultivation of the soil—a point they seemed to fear they would not possess in all its extent were the Corn-laws abolished. They thought the consequences of such a measure would be the relapse of the soil into its pristine state of uncultivated sterility, and that those who then laboured upon it and subsisted upon its produce would become, instead of wealthy, burdens upon the State. If he thought so, he would support them. He had turned his mind to that point, and he had also considered the manner in which the Corn-laws were framed, with the view of ascertaining whether the machinery of these laws did not apply its power in a manner beyond what was necessary for the achievement of the point which its supporters seemed to have in view. According to the ideas of these Gentlemen, it should be the object of the State to bribe those to cultivate the soil who would not, under other circumstances, do so; and, according to the proposition of the right hon. Baronet at the head of her Majesty's Government, the amount of this bribe was to be the difference in price of corn on the continent, and corn admitted to this country under the restrictive duties. Now there were two parties who were especially interested in the soil—the landlord and the farmer. The Corn-laws must, therefore, apply to one or both; and though there might be doubts as to the interest of the farmer in them, there could be none as to the interest of the landowner, as his whole property arose from the fertility of the soil. Now, if he could find that the working of the machinery of the Corn-laws, instead of being applied to the party who might require external influence, only touched him who needed no such stimulus to proceed with the cultivation of the soil, the existence of such a state of matters went evidently to prove, that although the Corn-laws were to be abolished, cultivation would still proceed. The landowner might, indeed, say he received a part of the bribe in question, but without it he would have difficulty in finding a tenant. He could conceive this plea to be valid, if it were attempted to be tried on the part of the landowner to obtain his present high rents after the duty on corn had been reduced or abolished; but when rents were reduced, as in consequence of such a measure they of course must be, the difficulty, he apprehended, would vanish. He had drawn his best argument against the idea of land going out of cultivation by a change in the Corn-laws, from the speech of the hon. Member for Kent maintaining the reverse of the proposition. The argument he alluded to was, that the soil would not go out of cultivation from a change in the protective duties in grain, were it only on account of the immense produce of the country, and the immense consumption of the country. It was impossible not to see that if the people were properly fed, they would not require a larger quantity of corn than that now consumed. The hon. Baronet the Member for Wiltshire made use of an argument to prove that the price of food had nothing to do with the condition of the labourer, which was on the face of it fallacious. He referred to one of the years of the war, when corn was 6*l.* 10*s.* a quarter, and said that no complaint was heard in our streets, and every man was comfortable and happy. Why, we were then at war, and we were manufacturers for the world. The consequence was that our army and navy were on an immense scale, and gave every man who cultivated the soil, or was engaged in manufactures, full employment. But even then the poor man was robbed by the high price of food of a certain surplus which would have gone to purchase some of the comforts of life. Nothing but a conscientious belief, founded on the grounds he had stated, could have induced him to vote for the motion of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton. One word as to the effect of the motion on Ireland. If, as was argued, the total repeal of these laws would bring ruin on that unfortunate country, he should be the last man to vote for it. But when wages were already so low in that country, surely an abundance of food must have the effect of bettering the condition of the people. To them there was no pretext for applying the fallacy, that a high price of corn brought with it high wages. If there were special burdens proved to exist with regard to the land, he should say adjust them more equally. But his present belief was, that the landlords had not injured themselves in the bargain which they struck with the rest of the community on the score of taxation. At any rate, his answer to their appeal at present was, "You can afford to be generous, and you will have, if it should be shown that you have injured yourselves, to place the question on a more equitable footing."

Mr. *Aglionby:* There were many hon. Members who had taken part in that debate, who had avowed themselves the advocates of free-trade, yet expressed their unwillingness, some to vote for the present motion, and others went the length of declaring they should vote against it. He participated in the difficulty which prompted them to make their speeches at variance with their votes. He did not altogether approve of the motion, especially the word "now" included in it; and though he never before supported such a proposition, he felt bound to give his assent to this. The reason which he conceived, justified him in taking this course, and which he trusted would be looked on as a sufficient inducement by others, was the enormous amount of suffering and distress which existed, for which he looked in vain for any remedy except an alteration in the Corn-laws. Had a moderate fixed duty been proposed by the Government, many would have left the ranks of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton to have supported such a measure. It would benefit commerce—at the same time that it would not create such alarm amongst the agriculturists. The distress had, in his opinion, penetrated the whole mass of the community. He was surprised to hear the hon. Baronet, the Member for Wiltshire say, that the operatives were most comfortable—at least, that those Conservative operatives by whom he had been invited to his northern circuit were so. He knew not how those dinners to which the hon. Baronet alluded were got up, but he could only say, that if those operatives were well off, and if they were in the habit of sitting down to good comfortable dinners, their condition was far different from that of the operatives in the county with which he was connected. He held in his hand a report from the committee of the operatives of Carlisle, which was not too highly coloured, or which was inaccurate only in very immaterial points; and they asserted, that their distress was extreme—that they had neither fire in their hearths, nor clothes to cover themselves, and they added this astounding fact, that one-fourth of the population, or about 6,000 persons, earned 1*s.* 1¾*d.* per week for subsistence, and that, excluding the children under twelve years, and those persons who could not obtain employment, the remainder only earned 1*s.* 9*d.* per week. The charitable committee formed in that town, composed of all shades of politics—Radicals, Whigs, and Tories; and of every profession, trade, and occupation, having no interest in the matter but to tell the truth, and thus induce charitable contributions—confirmed the statement which he had read. They divided the persons employed at different trades and various occupations, and showed, that there were 1,661 families, which, giving four to a family, would produce the result of a fourth of the whole population living on 1*s.* 2*d.* per head for each week. This was a state of things which must somehow or other be remedied. The right hon. Baronet assuredly meant that his measure should alleviate the distresses of the community, or he never would have introduced it. But in his opinion, it would prove no relief to the consumer, and tend very little to the alleviation of the distress throughout the country. Again, his vote was decided, by his belief that a sliding scale would prove injurious, equally to the farmer and manufacturer. It would disappoint the one by destroying all certainty in the markets, and do no benefit to the latter, because it would not act as a prohibition on the proper importation of corn. The public, again, looked with jealousy and suspicion on those for whom the hon. Member for Wiltshire declared he had a great affection, when they saw they made laws fatal to the general interests, and which only subserved their own. He had not the good fortune to have had any one of his family connected with the commercial interest. His property, small as it was, was derived from land. He, like the hon. Baronet, had a great affection for those similarly circumstanced; he loved the land; but he did not feel justified in keeping up a vast monopoly to the injury of the other classes of the community. They were told, however, that this body had a vested interest in their property. He recollected how much they had paid for vested interests, touched by the measure introduced by the noble Secretary for the Colonies. But he did not see the force of this cry at the present time. These laws were a question constantly mooted from year to year. The farmers might have made due provision for any change in their leases which they took during the period from '32 to the present time. But as they were not a very provident class, he was sure that their interests would not be disregarded by the mover of the motion. He should support this motion, as it was a system which was fraught with evil, both to the consumer and the farmer.

Mr. *G. Heneage* conceived, that those hon. Members who accused the agricultural interest of enjoying a monopoly, took no account of the middling and lower classes of the agricultural body. Though their holdings might be small, they were animated by a spirit of independence which rendered them so valuable to this country. Nothing but their independent spirit enabled them to hold up their heads under the many difficulties they had to contend against; and he believed, that the pauper would prefer his union fare to the scanty repasts of some of these small agriculturists. Attacks were made against the landowners, because they were supposed to be wealthy; but he had yet to learn, that the rich were to be pronounced guilty, merely because they were rich, as, in the time of the French revolution, it was sufficient to put any man out of the pale of society to call him an aristocrat. He remembered, some years ago, that the fundholders, like the landlords now, were the objects of attack, and the sponge at that time was the favourite remedy for the evils of the country. The fundholders were represented as few in number, and living on taxes, wrung from the hard earnings of the people; but it turned out, on the publication of official documents, that the number of fundholders exceeded 270,000. So it would appear, on investigation, that the number of landed proprietors was little short of that amount. Mr. M'Culloch observed, that there were a few individuals who possessed a large interest in land, but he estimated the total number of landed proprietors in England and Wales, at 200,000; and their gross annual income at 30,000,000*l.*, giving an average annual income to each individual of 150*l.* But as a few had much more than that amount, so many had much less, and were in consequence obliged to live a laborious life; and Mr. M'Culloch stated, there was not a greater mistake than to suppose that the landholders were an extremely opulent and indolent body. He would now conclude, by stating, that as he had voted against a fixed duty on the importation of corn, so he should oppose the present monstrous proposition of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton. He should have had great pleasure in supporting the right hon. Baronet, but he thought his scale not sufficiently high to protect the farmer; and he felt convinced, that the ruin which would come upon the land, though it might be delayed, was certain.

Mr. *Horsman* said, my hon. Friend who has just sat down rested his speech on his own statement, and for which he adduced no grounds, that the proposition of my Friend, the Member for Wolverhampton, was to bring poverty and ruin on the agriculturists. One would have thought from what fell from him that we were about to deprive them of their title-deeds, and their estates. That my hon. Friend really entertains these apprehensions, and that his expression of them is sincere, I have no doubt, but the House will feel that it is an assumption without an attempt at proof. Did he touch the point adverted to by the hon. Member for Waterford?—that the Corn-laws raised the price of bread; he neither denied the fact, nor attempted its justification. I am anxious to explain the grounds of my vote to-night, because, though ever since I have been a Member of this House, and even before I had that honour, I have ever held and acted up to the opinion that our whole system of Corn-laws was impolitic and unjust—unjust in its principle, and injurious in its effects—I still feel that the amendment of my hon. Friend is so unfortunately, and, in my opinion, injudiciously worded, that even those who agree most with him cannot vote with him without an explanation. I think it is hard on many of the Members of this House who agree with the principle contained in the amendment, that such difficulties should have been thrown in the way of their supporting their opinions by their vote. My hon. Friend would have been quite right in not ceding one iota of his principle, but the phraseology in which it was embodied should have been a secondary consideration, and should not have been so framed as to shut the door against those who were ready to have assisted him in advancing the principle he fought for. The ground on which I give him my vote is this—I consider that the existing law is based on the principle of protection, and I vote for totally abolishing the law which is based on that false foundation, and therefore ought not to stand. The right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government has himself now abandoned that principle. If he, then, and the House affirm the resolution of my hon. Friend, that this law be now abolished, I am ready then to enter with him on a consideration of those peculiar claims to compensation which the agriculturists can put forward, and with a determination on my part, which I am sure will be shared by all on this side of the House, to do that full justice to the landed interest which we ask the landed interest to do to the community at large. Sir, the longer this debate has lasted, the more do we see confirmed what was said at the commencement of it by the noble Lord, the late Secretary for the Colonies, that the proposal of the Government had disturbed everything and settled nothing. Speaker after Speaker had risen on that side of the House—all supporting the measure of the right hon. Baronet by their votes—all finding some fault with it in their speeches. The hon. Member for Pontefract told us they all approved of the measure, and, by way of showing his approval of it, he said in the next sentence that he wished the scale had been more liberally constructed, and that he looked on it as a step towards free-trade. The hon. Member for Canterbury, in his very able speech, hailed it as an instalment of justice to the same great principle; the Member for Norfolk, representing the county Members, also supported it, but thought it full of danger to the agriculturists; so do the other representatives of that interest. They tell you they have full confidence in the Member for Tamworth, but that confidence is the parent of sore misgivings; they entirely concur with all he proposes, yet they tremble at the price that concurrence may cost them. Sir, I find fault with the measure of the Government, but on account of the measure itself, and the mode of its introduction. If the right hon. Gentleman had at once proposed this measure as what it really is—a maintaining of the old law, with an alteration in some of its details, with a view to making it more effective and complete, his plan would not have been without its merit, and its improvements could not have been denied; but when it was preceded by such mystery and importance—when such pains were taken to raise large expectations only to create the greater disappointment—I think the course of the right hon. Gentleman was injudicious as regarded himself, and vexatious and unjust as regarded the public. The right hon. Gentleman took five months for deliberation, and the whole result of those five months has been to convince him of what every one else was convinced before, that there is very great and general distress in the manufacturing districts. That fact is attested by all parties now, and freely, and feelingly, and unreservedly acknowledged by the right hon. Baronet. Well, then, what duty does this acknowledgment impose on the Minister who makes it? Alas! he tells us none of it at all. He gives us no hope of even attempted alleviation, but says he shall leave it to the operation of natural causes. And this is the doctrine of a great Minister to a suffering country. What the natural causes are, to whose operation he looks for remedy, we shall probably learn when the Chancellor of the Exchequer brings forward his budget, and we shall then probably hear that the new mode of alleviating the distresses of a people are by augmenting their burdens. If this was to be the only fruit of the deliberations of the right hon. Baronet, it would have been as well for him at once to have adopted the policy announced by the present Chancellor of the Exchequer to which he is now so reconciled. "The right hon. Gentleman asks me," said he, in a burst of virtuous indignation, "what I would do to relieve the difficulties of the country; I answer him, I would do nothing at all." This was the enlightened policy announced last Session in opposition by the proximate Minister of Finance; and it is that which time for reflection and increasing distress has determined the Government to adopt. But though the right hon. Baronet agrees so well with one of his colleagues, he does not concur so entirely with another; the question is asked, "What is your justification of this Corn-law?" The right hon. Baronet very manfully repudiates protection to class interests, but what says the Paymaster of the Forces? He justifies the law on two grounds—first, that it may secure the landed proprietors in their estates; and, secondly, that it may enable them to maintain their station in society. These are plain, intelligible doctrines, coming from an eminent leader of the agriculturists, they are very valuable; but, coming from a Member of the Cabinet also, the authority is very high. Now, I will not meet them by any reference to selfish or unworthy objects. I cannot impute any such to any body of gentlemen, and I cannot believe that they deserve to be accused of having intentionally and wilfully promoted their own interests in the Legislature at the expense of the community, and at all times I am disposed to deprecate the attempt to advance a party cause by disparaging the character of opponents. I will not, therefore, say, that your legislation has proceeded from bad motives, but I do say, that it has had bad results; those results, in appearance and character, have been a taxing of the poor man's bread to increase the rich man's luxury—depriving the poor man of the necessaries of life, and securing to the rich an increase of its abundance. You forget that to you, with your means and your station, the cost of subsistence forms but a small item in your expenditure; but every penny that you add to the poor man's loaf deprives his children of a meal. The right hon. Member for Tamworth puts it on another ground. He is too accomplished a tactician to advance anything so untenable, and so he has recourse to the old plea of patriotism, and the fear of dependence on foreign nations. I think that plea was well disposed of by the noble Lord, the late Secretary for the Colonies, when he adverted to the fact, that we were a great commercial nation, and an unrivalled maritime power; that we had the most extensive commerce in the world, and the most powerful armaments to protect it. But what, after all, is this danger of dependence to be apprehended? Is it a greater evil than the dependence we now suffer? What says the committee of 1833? The right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Dorchester, was a member of that committee; and Mr. Jacobs's evidence on this head was so valuable and so startling, that it was extracted from the body of the evidence, and introduced into the report itself. Mr. Jacobs, after speaking of the produce of this country in average years, is then asked of a scarce year this question:—

> "Supposing the harvest of 1816 was to come over again, whence do you contemplate a supply?"

He answered,—

> "We could not be supplied from all the world. If that harvest were to come over again, and the next harvest were deficient by one-tenth, we should have such a deficiency as all the world could not supply at any price."

This, then, is your state of dependence and risk now, under your present narrow and injudicious system. You cannot grow enough for your own subsistence, but you take care that others shall not have the means of supplying you when you most want it, for you discourage their growing more than they require themselves; and thus, when your hour of need arrives—when hunger and famine are stalking in your streets, you spurn the hand that might be stretched out to save you, and perish in your folly without aid, without sympathy, from your neighbours. But supposing we do become dependent on foreigners, what, after all, is the evil? We must be dependent on some one, and, amid the vicissitudes of climate and seasons, of which the right hon. Baronet told us, it is better to be dependent on the world at large than on one small island—better to depend on the foreign producer, who will sell us bread cheap, then on the home producer, who will only sell it dear. Talk to me of the evils of dependence; the certain and inevitable evils which we daily and hourly experience from being at the mercy of our home monopolists outweigh a thousand times all the imaginary ones which sophistry or selfishness can conjure up to frighten us with. The plan of the Government, being in my view merely a reconsideration of the old law, is only a revival of the former discussions in this House; but some admissions have been made by the right hon. Baronet at the head of it which place the opponents of monopoly on much stronger grounds. In the first place, we have the admission, that the existing protection which we have so often assailed, but which the right hon. Gentleman and his Friends so obstinately defended, is a great deal too high, and ought not to be retained. This is a concession, though to be sure one that is robbed of all its grace by the recommendation of the right hon. Leader to his friends to part with it, only because it does them no good. And so the right hon. Baronet recommends his plan to his Friends by saying,—"You have now a great superfluous protection, and vast unnecessary odium. My plan is one by which the odium will be diminished, but the protection in reality untouched." The second admission of the right hon. Gentleman is, that the agriculturists as a class are not entitled to any legislative protection whatever. That is a doctrine broadly and unequivocally laid down, and cannot be departed from in future. The whole defence of the Corn-law, then, is narrowed to that miserable, and shallow, and untenable doctrine of non-dependence on other countries—a doctrine so narrow and so ignorant, so replete with misery, and starvation, and self-destruction, that it may be called the doctrine of insanity: for what is it but insanity to say, that your millions shall be stinted upon home produce rather than well fed upon the productions of another nation? Is there any other country in the world in which such shocking and disgraceful occurrences could take place as occurred here in 1837? Under the operation of these laws you had distress in the Highlands—a distress unprecedented—thousands perishing for want of bread. At the very moment when representations of this distress were crowding upon the Government, some merchants in London, who had a quantity of wheat in bond, and who found that its being kept in warehouse was an accumulating loss to them, asked permission of the Government to take it out of bond and to destroy it. The permission was given; the wheat was sunk in the Thames under the inspection of the Custom-house officers, and that occurred at one end of the kingdom of which a portion of the subjects were starving at another. What a commentary is this upon your Corn-law! If it had not been for the care of our landlords to make these people independent of foreigners, this corn would have saved many a poor family from starvation. The more I consider this question, and the position of the right hon. Gentleman towards it, the more I wonder at the proposition he has thought it worth while to submit to the House. The right hon. Gentleman had before an unbroken army of champions of the existing law—some may have wished for some modification of that law, but undoubtedly the majority would have preferred the old law to the new one. The right hon. Vice-President was at pains to read to us the opinions of adverse parties, and to show that the right hon. Gentleman had dissatisfied all. There were some of his party anxious to keep the law as it was; from them he can receive no gratitude. There were others ready to agree to some change, to effect an adjustment of the question, and put an end to agitation: has he pleased them?—just the reverse; he has increased excitement and perpetuated agitation. Was it to check frauds that he interfered?—he denied, or at least made light of their existence. Has he relieved the community by diminishing protection?—he has only touched the scale where it never operated. Has he unfettered commerce and admitted corn as a commodity of trade?—Mr. Meek shows you that your duty is prohibitory. Has he aimed at alleviating distress?—he tells us he does not attempt it. Then, once more, was it worth while to meddle, when meddling unsettled everything, and settled nothing at all? The object I cannot tell, but the result is easily seen. The repeal of these laws has been advanced by their friend far more in one week than it could have been advanced by their opponents in years. You have made the first breach in the works; the first outwork has been carried, and after so obstinate a defence as to betray the weakness of the citadel within, you have sanctioned by your authority the verdict which the public had already passed upon that law. You have exercised the power which you possessed of condemning the old law; you have not the power to perpetuate one like it in its place. But your efforts are not without advantage. Look to the history of this country, and you will see that all the greatest changes in our institutions have been precipitated by an injudicious clinging unto abuses that the public had condemned. The right hon. Gentleman's own career might remind him of this wholesome truth. Fighting the battles of monopoly to the last; he has been inadvertently one of the best Reformers of the age, and, as it has been with him before, so will it be now. These laws are doomed—and doomed, in spite of the majority in which the right hon. Gentleman finds strength. That majority is powerful—but not so powerful as truth. Can a majority turn back the truth? Can it sanctify monopoly? Can it force prosperity from restriction? You may plume yourself on your strength—you may glory in your anticipated majority, but the right hon. Baronet has found before this, that a minority battling for the right is more formidable than a majority committed to error; and the longer he perpetuates that contest, in which he must be defeated at last, the more calamitous will that defeat be found in the loss of something to his followers more valuable than the law on which "their station in society" depends.

Mr. *Cowper* thought, that the immediate repeal of the Corn-laws would produce misery amongst the agricultural classes, and consequently could not support it. But in voting against the motion of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, he was far from approving of the proposition of the Government. He, at the same time, confessed that that proposition was an improvement of the present law; but the fundamental evil of the sliding scale still remained, and whilst that remained some change must be necessary. By that principle the currency was disturbed. A supply from the United States altogether prevented—a supply from Europe and Asia diminished and impeded—and consequent distress caused to the people of England.

Sir *R. Bateson* felt himself called upon, as an Irish landlord, to notice some of the observations which had fallen from the hon. Member for Waterford. The hon. Member had accused the Irish landlords of causing the distress of the people of that country by exacting high rents. No man could reprobate such a course of proceeding more than he (Sir R. Bateson) did. His principle had always been to live and let live. He would, however, remind the hon. Member for Waterford, that it did not altogether depend upon the will of the landlords whether rents should be reduced in Ireland. In that country estates were held on long leases for three lives or sixty years. They were frequently also under the control of Chancery, or trustees who had no power to reduce rents. He was greatly astonished to hear the hon. Member for Waterford, or any Irish Member, avow that he would vote for the repeal of the Corn-laws. One of the great sources of discontent among the people of Ireland was the want of employment. There were no manufactures in that country to afford occupation to the population, and if cultivation were abandoned many counties would present the appearance of deserts The price of wheat did not affect the great mass of the Irish population, for the chief article of their food was the potatoe and oatmeal. Cheap bread would be of no use to them, because they could not afford to buy it. Oats was the important crop for Ireland, and he regretted that the right hon. Baronet's plan did not afford greater protection to that article. The manufacturers had no right to taunt hon. Members on his side of the House with being actuated by selfish motives. Those who lived in glass houses ought not to be the first to throw stones. The House and the country remembered the opposition which the manufacturers offered to the bill for limiting the hours of infants in factories to eight hours a day. Would any one work his horse more than ten hours a day? And yet, to his grief and horror, he had heard Gentlemen in that House advocate the system under which children were worked more than horses. When the manufacturers talked of the men who had made their own fortunes starving at their doors, why did they not work the children only half the usual time, and give the others some employment?

Mr. *E. Protheroe* said, he had the good fortune to be the representative of a manufacturing borough which had not been visited by distress, and he attributed that circumstance to the great variety of the branches of trade in which his constituents were occupied. Notwithstanding this, however, he, representing the opinion of his constituents, was prepared to vote for the total repeal of the Corn-laws. He was not alarmed at the word "now," and was ready to give his adhesion to the resolution which the hon. Member for Wolverhampton had proposed. If it could be proved that the agriculturists would sustain any injury from the measure, he had no doubt that the nation which had given twenty millions to the West-India slave-owners would fully compensate them. It appeared to him that it was a proper description of the Corn-laws to say that they enacted starvation. It was easy to prove, that the rate of wages had increased in proportion as food had been more abundant. About the close of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century, wages rose 10 per cent., and the average price of corn declined 10 per cent. The importance of the home market had been much dwelt on, but those who insisted so strongly on the value of that market, seemed to forget that the manufacturers formed an important class among those on whom the home market depended. It was kind on the part of the agriculturists to show so much solicitude for the manufacturers, but the manufacturers, were quite able to take care of themselves, and had sufficient ingenuity to find the best market, if they were only left to themselves. He did not believe that to provide the people with corn would at all tend to menace the independence of the country; on the contrary, it would be all the better able to contend with its enemies in case of a war.

Sir *Howard Douglas* said, at the period of his election, being aware that measures of vast national moment would be brought under the early notice of Parliament, he had determined that on none of those questions should aught of doubt or suspicion rest on the accordance of his views with those of his constituents. He, therefore, had taken care to explain fully his principles and opinions on all matters, relating whether to the agricultural, the commercial, or the manufacturing interests; he had declared explicitly that he was, and should continue, a firm supporter of the "protective" system; but had ever declared his willingness to revise and modify the degrees of protection to each interest severally, for the general advantage of all. He had gone into the commercial history of every country in the world for the purpose of showing that in no country were the free-trade principles thoroughly carried out; thence deducing the certainty of great and dangerous evils arising from the abolition, as to agriculture, as well as other interests, of protection. With these declarations he had offered himself a candidate for Liverpool, and had experienced the honour—he might call it the singular good fortune of being elected without opposition. He had a right, therefore, to conclude that the opinions on which he was prepared in that House to act were agreeable to his constituents. He begged it to be distinctly understood, that he considered himself there, not as the representative of any particular "class," or "interest," but as one bound to consider the general interests of the community. The hon. Gentleman opposite, the Member for Wolverhampton, had called the attention of the House to the geographical position of these islands as placed between two great continents—the old world and the new; and then the hon. Member represented us as refusing to both, a supply of our manufactures, by shutting out their productions. "Continents" was a term of wide signification, and, perhaps, it would be hardly necessary that he should trouble the House by examining very minutely into the systems on which the several nations of the continent of Europe conducted their commercial relations. He should not then waste the time of the House by recapitulating the heads of the Russian, Prussian, and Danish tariffs; but he should observe that the consumption of the British manufactures by the populations of those countries varied between 3½*d.* and 5½*d.* for each individual per annum. It was not necessary, for his present purpose, to occupy the time of the House by any detailed investigation of our commercial intercourse with those countries; he should rather come at once to the position in which we stood with respect to France. It had been said in the course of the present discussions, as well as on former occasions, that we shut our doors against French produce — shut our doors! Had we not twice altered the duties which we charged upon French wines? Had we not opened the ports of our East Indian possessions, and had we not facilitated to the French people the exportation of coals, iron, machinery, and tools? But to us they made no return—no diminution of duty. The fact was, that articles of British manufacture were positively or virtually prohibited, with the exception only of those required for the improvement of arts and manufactures. Eleven pence per annum for each individual composing the French nation, was about the average value of the manufactured goods imported by France from this country. Pass we then to the United States of America; and here he paused for a moment, to refer to the sentiments of the noble Lord the Member for London, previous to doing which, however, he wished to express his regret that that noble Lord was not in his place, entertaining, as he did, the greatest respect for that noble Lord. He respected his abilities and his character, and remembering the relation in which they recently stood towards each other, he could not refrain from expressing his strong sense of the kind and generous manner in which he had been supported by the noble Lord. Though he was the nominee of a different Ministry, yet the noble Lord had, with the weight which belonged to his office, sustained him in his administration of the government of the Ionian Islands—an administration which he rejoiced to think had proved satisfactory to the Government at home, beneficial to the Ionian people, and not discreditable to himself. The noble Lord had said that the manufactures of this country, were shut out from the United States of America, because we refused to take the staple productions of those States. He desired to learn upon what foundation such a statement rested. The facts known to the public, and of which he in common with the rest of the world possessed evidence, could leave not a shadow of doubt upon the mind of any man that this was a statement resting upon no solid basis. What were the facts? In the year 1840, there were imported into the emporium which he had the honour to represent, 1,160,000 bales of cotton; nearly the whole of the cotton used for manufactures in this country came from the United States of America. Under such a state of things it was absurd beyond measure to say that we shut out the produce of America. It could hardly fail to be in the recollection of every Gentleman who heard him, that we had lowered the duty on American cotton to please the merchants and manufacturers of Manchester; that was received as a boon, and in the next breath the Government were told that they were shutting out the produce of the United States. In the course of these discussions, and on many similar occasions, free-trade had been in the mouth of almost every speaker; but he confessed himself one of those who thought that what people called free-trade was a sheer absurdity. It was the opinion of all men who exercised common sense upon political subjects, that a new country exporting raw material to a highly civilized and manufacturing nation, ought in return to take back some portion of its own productions, when converted into manufactured goods. Now, he begged of the House to look at the position in which we stood towards the United States of America. We took their raw material, but they refused to take our manufactured goods. Considerable importance had been attached to a judicious observation made by an American President, when he said, that no country ought to permit itself to depend upon foreign supply for the necessary articles of life, and least of all, for the food of the people. Such was the language now held—such were the principles upon which the government of America was now carried on, but they were not contrary to the principles adopted in the earlier days of Republicanism. The system was unchanged; it was the protective system, and whatever alteration of circumstances might arise, it was the fixed resolution of every successive government in America neither to abolish nor relax their protective system. To support this opinion, he had made brief extracts from the annual message of every President since the days of Washington downwards, and, with the permission of the House he would read them. The first, of course, was from a message of Washington's: it was his eighth annual message, and bore date the 7th of December, 1796. It was in these words:—

"Congress have repeatedly directed their attention to the encouragement of manufactures. The object is of too much consequence, not to insure a continuance of their efforts, in every way which shall appear eligible."

The next extract which he should read to the House was from the eighth annual address of Mr. Jefferson, dated November the 8th, 1808, and was in the following terms:—

"The extent of this conversion is daily increasing,—(viz., the application of industry and capital to internal manufactures), and little doubt remains that the establishments formed, and forming will, under the auspices of cheaper material and subsistence, the freedom of labour from taxation with us, and of protecting duties and prohibitions, become permanent."

Such was the language of President Jefferson. Now, let the House listen to the words of Mr. Madison, in his seventh annual message, dated December 6th, 1815. These were his words:—

"However wise the theory may be, which leaves to the sagacity and interest of individuals, the application of their industry and resources, there are in this, as in other cases, exceptions to the general rule. Besides the condition which the theory itself implies, of a reciprocal adoption by other nations, experience teaches that so many circumstances must occur in introducing manufacturing establishments, that a country may remain long without them, although sufficiently advanced, and in some respects very peculiarly fitted, for carrying them on with success. Under these circumstances, giving a powerful impulse to manufacturing industry, it has made among us a progress, and exhibited an efficiency which justify the belief that, with a protection not more than is due to the enterprizing citizens, whose interests are now at stake, it will become at an early day, not only safe against occasional competitors from abroad, but a source of domestic wealth, and even of external commerce."

He now came to President Monroe, who on the 5th of March, 1817, addressed Congress as follows:—

"Our manufactures find a generous encouragement by the policy which patronizes domestic industry; and the surplus of our produce a steady and profitable market by local wants in less favoured parts at home."

In a previous message, (his first annual message) on the 2nd December, 1817, he says,—

"Our manufactories will require the continued attention of Congress. The capital employed in them is considerable, and the knowledge required in the machinery and fabric of all the most useful manufactures is of great value. Their preservation, which depends on due encouragement, is connected with high interests of the nation."

The same President, on the 3rd of December, 1821, proceeds, in a similar spirit, to say, that—

"Possessing, as we do, the raw materials in such vast amount, with a capacity to augment them to an indefinite extent, raising within the country, aliment of every kind to an amount far exceeding the demand for home consumption, even in the most unfavourable years, and to be obtained always at a very moderate price; skilled also, as our people are, in the mechanic arts, and in every improvement calculated to lessen the demand for, and the price of labour, it is manifest, that their success in every branch of domestic industry may and will be carried, under the encouragement given by the present duties, to an extent, to meet any demand which, under a fair competition, may be made on it."

Again, we find him saying:—

"It cannot be doubted, that the more complete our internal resources, and the less dependent we are on foreign powers for every national, as well as domestic purpose, the greater and more stable will be the public felicity. By the increase of domestic manufactures, will the demand for the rude materials at home be increased, and thus will the dependence of the several parts of our union on each other, and the strength of the union itself, be proportionably augmented."

He would next, with the permission of the House, read an extract from the first annual message of President Jackson, which was addressed to Congress on the 8th of December, 1829:—

"The general rule to be applied in graduating duties upon articles of foreign growth or manufacture, is that which will place our own in fair competition with those of other countries; and the inducements to advance even a step beyond this point, are controlling in regard to those articles which are of primary necessity in time of war."

From the year 1816 to the year 1832, the protective system of the United States was carried to its utmost limit; in fact, protection was overdone, and without abandoning the principle upon which they had always acted, the American Government relaxed the degree of its severity per annum. They reduced by one-tenth per annum a duty which had been (as we understood) 50 per cent. By this act, the compromise act of 1833, the then excessive duties, were reduced gradually until, in June 1842, they should come to 20 per cent. and then be permanent. On the 4th December, 1832, we find President Jackson using this language in his address to Congress:—

"That manufactures adequate to the supply of our domestic consumption would, in the abstract, be beneficial to our country, there is no reason to doubt; and to effect their establishment, there is, perhaps, no American citizen who would not, for a while, be willing to pay a higher price for them."

He hoped the extracts which he had read to the House, were quite sufficient to show that the Americans proceeded upon the protective system, and carried it to as high a point as existing circumstances permitted. Whatever had been done or might be done by us, the United States would not abandon their protective system. Revenue necessities would oblige them to re-augment those duties. For himself, he must be allowed to say that he admired their lofty policy which would not sacrifice independence and power to any considerations of speculative wealth, and he admired the disposition of the French people to adopt that principle likewise. They, too, had their *doctrinaires* who endeavoured to teach them that it was wise to buy only where they could buy the cheapest; but neither the French nor the United States would listen to such theories. It might be a doctrine of political economy to buy at the cheapest market; but political economy was not always political wisdom; it sometimes became political prodigality. At the late election he told his friends not to inscribe on his banners "free-trade;" that which he wanted was "fair trade." He did not understand that one-sided policy which, under the name of free-trade, produced unfair trade. But fair trade, he confidently hoped, would be promoted by the present Government. He did not undervalue or underrate our trade with the United States. He trusted that the mission of a noble and eminent person would succeed in settling all differences, and in maintaining friendly relations with the United States; that mission would at least show, that her Majesty's Government were determined to attempt this by every means consistent with the dignity of the Crown, and the safety, happiness, and welfare of the people. He now wished to say a few words about the pleasing dream in which the noble Lord opposite (Lord Palmerston) had indulged; of removing all barriers between nations and nations, and resolving all mankind into one family. If the noble Lord, said the hon. Member, had been an unsophisticated country Gentleman, educated under the care of some old maiden aunt, by some tutor of Dominie Sampson-like simplicity, brought up in some sequestered part of the Hebrides, or in some 'happy valley' of the Principality—well skilled in all the lore of the philosophy which assumes the perfectability of human nature; unversed in the wiles of politics, and ignorant of the tales and lessons which diplomacy unfolds, I might have believed him to be the dupe of his own visions; but I marvel that his experience, as a Minister, and, particularly, as a Foreign Secretary, had not awakened him from his dreams. Let the noble Lord be warned by the present political aspect of the world; for national rivalry was never more stirring; national ambition never more wide awake; propensities to war never stronger than at present. It did surprise him to find the noble Lord say, he desired to see the word "protection" erased from our commercial code. He challenged the noble Lord to go along with him, in a comparison, point by point, country by country, and class by class, in connection with this question, and he would engage to prove, that, if all protection were abolished, that the noble Lord could no more raise a revenue to pay the national debt, and the current expenses of the country, than he could fly to the moon. He would ask the noble Lord what would be the situation of the home market, if protection were withdrawn from agriculture? What would become of the colonial trade, if protection were withdrawn from it? He did not hesitate to say, that if, in the present artificial state of the country, loaded as it was with debt, the noble Lord were to erase the word "protection," by any process whatever, he would find it necessary to perform a corresponding operation with the spunge—that of wiping out the national debt, and thereupon blotting out majestic, imperial Britain, from that high station in the rank of nations, to which she had attained by the protective system. An hon. Member had made a declaration in that House, by which it would be seen that he was perfectly aware that the majestic greatness of this nation had not been attained by carrying into effect those doctrines of political economy which were professed and lauded by the hon. Member for Bolton, whom he greatly respected, and whose talents, notwithstanding that he dissented from his political opinions, he admired. In spite, however, of those principles, he would tell the hon. Gentleman, that the little islands which composed the United Kingdom, bounded in space, and limited as they were by stormy seas, but inhabited by a hardy, enterprising, and industrious race, had been expanded into such an empire as the world never saw, by commercial enterprises duly protected. May we ever maintain that great empire in that vast ascendancy to which she has thus attained (exclaimed the hon. Gentleman), in spite of the principles and predictions of those who say that we have pursued a wrong course. I have been reluctantly called upon to take a part in this discussion, and I shall finish by thanking the House for its attention, and by assuring hon. Gentlemen that I shall not often trespass upon their patience. I shall never speak, but when I have something to say. [*Ironical Cheers.*] I repeat, I shall never speak but when I have something to say, and I shall finish when I have done.

Mr. *Cobden* said, the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, (Sir Howard Douglas) would have given still greater satisfaction to the House if he had assured us that he would, when he spoke, always keep strictly to the subject matter under discussion. I must be allowed to say, that my hon. Friend, the Member for Wolverhampton, has very just ground for complaining, that in all this discussion, to which I have been listening for seven nights, while there has been much talk of our trade with China, and of the war with Syria, while there has been much contest between parties and partisans, there has been little said upon the question really in hand. I may safely say, that on the other side, not one speaker has grappled with the question so ably laid down by my hon. Friend. That question simply is, how far it is just, honest, and expedient, that any tax whatever should be laid upon the food of the people. This is the question we have to decide; and when I heard the right hon. Baronet, Sir Robert Peel, so often express the deep sympathy he felt for the working classes, I did expect that he would not have finished his last speech without giving some little consideration to the case of the working man in connection with this question. I will venture to call the attention of the committee to the question of the bread tax as connected with the labouring classes, as it bears upon the wages of labour; and I call upon you all to meet me upon neutral ground while we discuss the interests of those working people who have no representatives in this House. As I hear from the other side so many and so strong expressions of sympathy, I call upon them to give practical proof of the existence of that sympathy with the hard labouring population, and not to delay until they are reduced to that state when they can only receive the benefits of your legislation in the abject condition of pauperism. Sir, in reading, which I have done with great attention, the reports of the debates which took place in 1815, prior to the passing of the Corn Bill of that year, I have been struck with the observation, that all who took part in that discussion agreed on one point of the subject, namely, that the price of food regulated the rate of wages. That principle was not only laid down by one side of the House, but it met with the concurrence of both. Men the most opposite in political opinions I find agreeing upon that principle. Mr. Horner, Mr. Baring, Mr. Frankland Lewis, Mr. Philips, Mr. Western, those who opposed the Corn-law, and those who strenuously advocated its principle, all alike agreed upon the single point, that the price of food regulated the price of labour. So completely did they agree, that one speaker laid down the principle mathematically, and framed a computation in figures to show the relative proportions in which the principle would work, and to what extent the payment of labour would rise or fall in ratio to the rise or fall of the price of food. The same delusion existed amongst the capitalists out of doors. There was a petition presented in 1815, signed by the most intelligent merchants and manufacturers in Manchester, praying that the Corn-law should not pass, because it would so raise the rate of wages that the British manufacturers would no longer be able to compete with those abroad, who had to pay wages so much less in amount. That delusion certainly did then exist; but I have been struck with the deepest sorrow to observe that the minds of many men who bear their part in the discussion now should still be labouring under the same erroneous impression. The great body of those who legislated in 1815 passed their bill in the honest delusion that the operation of the law would be such as I have described. I believe that if the fact, if the true state of the case had been then known, if they had known what now we know, that law would never have been passed in 1815. Every party in the House, and many out of doors, were deceived; but there was one party which was not deluded—the party most interested in the question—namely, the working classes. They were not deluded, for they saw with instinctive sagacity, without the aids of learning and education, without the pretence of political wisdom, what would be the operation of the law upon the rate of wages. Therefore it was, that when that law was passed your House was surrounded by the excited populace of London, and you were compelled to keep back an enraged people from your doors by the point of the bayonet. When that law passed murder ensued. Yes, I call it murder, for the coroner's jury returned a verdict of wilful murder against the soldiers. The disturbances were not confined to London; but throughout the North of England, from 1815 to 1819, when the great meeting took place on Peter's-field, there never was a meeting in the North of England in which banners were not displayed with inscriptions of "No Corn-laws." There was no mistake in the minds of the multitudes upon this question. It was always understood by them. Do not let hon. Gentlemen suppose that there is any mistake in the minds of the working classes upon this topic. There never was, and there is not now. They may not indeed cry out exclusively for the repeal of the Corn-laws; they have looked beyond the question, and they have seen, at the same time, other evils greater than this which they are now calling upon you to remedy; and when they raise the cry of universal suffrage and the people's charter, do not let hon. Gentlemen opposite suppose, because the Anti-Corn-law League may, perchance, have run into collision with the masses upon some points, that the people are consequently favourable to the existence of the Corn-laws. What has surprised me more than anything, is, to find that in this House, where lecturers are, of all men, so much decried, there exists on the other side such an ignorance upon this subject. [" *Oh, oh.*"] Yes, I say an ignorance upon this subject that I never saw equalled in any body of working men in the North of England. [" *Oh, oh.*"] Do you think that the fallacy of 1815, which, to my astonishment, I heard put forth in the House last week, namely, that wages rise and fall with the price of food, can prevail with the minds of the working men after the experience of the last three years? Have you not had bread higher during that time than during any three years during the last twenty years? Yes. Yet during those three years the wages of labour in every branch of industry have suffered a greater decline than in any three years before. Still hon. Gentlemen opposite, with their reports of committees before them, which, if they would take the trouble to consult them, would prove the decline of wages within those three years, are persisting in maintaining the doctrine that the price of food regulates the rate of wages under the belief that this new law will keep up the price of labour. Then I am told that the price of labour in this country is so much higher than the wages abroad, that the Corn-laws must be kept up in order to keep up labour to the proper level. Sir, I deny that labour in this country is higher paid than on the continent. On the contrary, I am prepared to prove, from documents on the Table of your own House, that the price of labour is cheaper here than in any part of the globe. I hear an expression of dissent on the other side, but I say to hon. Gentlemen, when they measure the labour of an Englishman against the labour of the foreigner, they measure a day's labour indeed with a day's labour, but they forget the relative quality of the labour. I maintain that if quality is to be the test, the labour of England is the cheapest in the world. The committee which sat on machinery in the last Session but one, demonstrated by their report that labour on the continent is dearer than in England. You have proof of it. Were it not so, do you think you would find in Germany, France, or Belgium, so many English workmen? Go into any city from Calais to Vienna, containing a population of more than 10,000 inhabitants, and will you not find numbers of English artisans working side by side with the natives of the place, and earning twice as much as they do, or even more? Yet the masters who employ them declare, notwithstanding the pay is higher, that the English labour is cheaper to them than the native labour. Yet we are told that the object of the manufacturers in repealing the Corn-laws is to lower wages to the level of the continent. It was justly said by the hon. Member for Kilmarnock that the manufacturers did not require to lower the rate of wages in order to gain high profits. If you want proof of the prosperity of manufactures, you will find it when wages are high, but when wages drop, the profits of the manufacturer drop also. I think manufacturers take too intelligent and enlightened a view of their own position and interest to suppose that the impoverishment of the multitudes they employ can promote or increase manufacturing prosperity. Sir, by deteriorating such a vast population as that employed in manufactures, you run the risk of spoiling not the animal man only, but the intellectual creature also. It is not from the wretched that great things can emanate; it is not a potatoe-fed population that ever led the world in arts or arms, in manufactures or commerce. If you want your people to be virtuous or happy, you must take care that they are well fed. Upon this assumption, then, that the manufacturers want to reduce wages, and upon the assumption that the Corn-laws keep up the price of labour, we are going to pass a law to tax the food of the hard-working, deserving population. What must be the result? You have heard, from the right hon. Baronet, Sir R. Peel, an answer to the fallacy about our competing with foreign manufacturers. He has told you we export forty or fifty millions. We do then already compete with foreigners. You tax the bones and muscles of your people. You put a double weight upon their shoulders, and then you turn round upon them and tell them to run a race with Germany and France. I would ask, with Mr. Deacon Hume, who has been before quoted in this House, " To whom do the energies of the British people belong? Are they theirs, or are they yours? Think you that these energies were given to the English people that they might struggle for a bare existence, whilst you take from them half of what they earn? Is this doing justice to the "high-mettled racer?" Why you don't treat your horses so. You give your cattle food and rest in proportion to their toil, but men in England are now actually treated worse. Yes, tens of thousands of them were last winter treated worse than your dogs and your horses. What is the pretence upon which you tax the people's food? We have been told by the right hon. Baronet that the object of the law is to fix a certain price for corn. Since I have been listening to this debate, in which I heard it proposed by a Prime Minister to fix the price of corn, I doubted whether or not we had gone back to the days of our Edwards again, and whether we had or not travelled back some three or four centuries, when they used to fix the price of a tablecloth or a pair of shoes. What an avocation for a legislator! To fix the price of corn! Why that should be done in the open market by the dealers. You don't fix the price of cotton, or silk, or iron, or tin. But how are you to fix this price of corn? Going back some ten years, the right hon. Baronet finds the average price of corn is 56*s.* 10*d.*; and, therefore says he, I propose to keep up the price of wheat from 54*s.* to 58*s.* The right hon. Baronet's plan means that or nothing. I have heard something about the prices which it has been proposed by legislation to affix to wheat. I remember that Lord Willoughby D'Eresby said the minimum price ought to be 58*s.*, and I see by the newspapers that the Duke of Buckingham has just announced his opinion that 60*s.* ought to be the lowest. There is one hon. Gentleman in this House who, I hope, will speak on this subject (for I have seen him endeavouring to catch the Speaker's eye), and who has gone a little more into particulars respecting the market price he intends to procure for commodities by act of Parliament. I see in a useful little book called the "Parliamentary Pocket Companion," in which there are some nice little descriptions given of ourselves, under the head "Cayley," that that gentleman is described as being the advocate of "such a course of legislation with regard to agriculture as will keep wheat at 64*s.* a quarter, new milk cheese at from 52*s.* to 60*s.* per cwt., wool and butter at 1*s.* per lb. each, and other produce in proportion. Now it might be very amusing that there were to be found some Gentlemen still at large, who advocated the principle of the interposition of Parliament to fix the price at which articles should be sold; but when we find a Prime Minister coming down to Parliament to avow such principles, it really becomes anything but amusing. I ask the right hon. Baronet, and I pause for a reply, is he prepared to carry out that principle in the articles of cotton and wool?

Sir *R. Peel* said, it was impossible to fix the price of food by legislation.

Mr. *Cobden:* Then on what are we legislating? I thank the right hon. Baronet for his avowal. Perhaps, then, he will oblige us by not trying to do so. Supposing, however, that he will make the attempt, I ask the right hon. Gentleman, and again I pause for a reply,—will he try to legislate so as to keep up the price of cotton, silk, and wool? No reply. Then we have come to this conclusion—that we are not legislating for the universal people. We are openly avowing that we are met here to legislate for a class against the people. When I consider this I don't marvel, although I have seen it with the deepest regret, and I may add, indignation, that we have been surrounded during the course of the debates of the last week by an immense body of police. [*"Oh, oh, and laughter from the Ministerial side."*] I will not let this subject drop, even though I may be greeted with laughter. It is no laughing matter to those who have got no wheat to sell, nor money to purchase it from those who have. If the agriculturists are to have the benefit of a law founded on the calculation of ten year's average, to keep up their price at that average, I ask, are the manufacturers to have it too? Take the manufacturers of the midland counties, the manufacturers of the very articles the agriculturists consume. Their goods have depreciated 30 per cent. in the last ten years. Are they to continue to exchange their commodities for the corn of the landlord, who has the benefit of a law keeping up his price on a calculation of a ten year's average, without the iron manufacturer having the benefit of the same consideration? I have great doubts whether this is legislation at all. I deny that it is honest legislation. It is no answer for the right hon. Baronet to say that he cannot, even if he wished, pass a law to keep up the price of manufactures. It is no satisfaction for being injured by a Prime Minister, to be told that he has not the power, even if he has the will, to make atonement. I only ask him to abstain from doing that for which he cannot make atonement, and surely there is nothing unreasonable in that request. I have but touched upon the skirts of this subject. I ask the right hon. Baronet whether while he fixes his scale of prices to secure to the landowners 56*s.* a quarter, he has got also a sliding scale for wages? I know but of one class of labourers in this country whose interests are well secured by the sliding scale of corn duties, and that class is the clergy of the Established Church, whose tithes are calculated upon the averages. But I want to know what you will do with the hard-working classes of the community, the labouring artizans, if the price of bread is to be kept up by Act of Parliament. Will you give them a law to keep up the rate of their wages? You will say that you cannot keep up the rate of wages; but that is no reason you should pass a law to mulct the working man one third of the loaf he earns. I know well the way in which the petitions of the hand-loom weavers were received in this House. "Poor, ignorant men," you said, "they know not what they ask, they are not political economists, they do not know that the price of labour, like other commodities, finds its own level by the ordinary law of supply and demand. We can do nothing for them." But I ask, then, why do you pass a law to keep up the price of corn, and at the same time say you cannot pass a law to keep up the price of the poor man's labour? This is the point of view in which the country are approaching this question; and the flimsy veil of sophistry you are throwing over the question, and the combination of figures put together and dovetailed to answer a particular purpose, will not satisfy the people of England, till you show them that you are legislating impartially for the advantage of all classes, and not for the exclusive benefit of one. What are the pretexts upon which this corn tax is justified? We have heard in the first place, that there are exclusive burthens borne by the agriculturists. I heard one explanation given of those burthens by a facetious gentleman who sits near me. He said that the only exclusive burthens upon the land which he knew of were mortgages. I think the country has a right to know, and indeed I think it would have been no more than what was due to this House if those burthens of which we have heard so much had been named and enumerated. The answer I heard from the right hon. Gentleman, (Sir R. Peel) opposite was, that there was a great variety of opinions on the subject of these burthens. That I could myself have told the right hon. Baronet. As a law is to be framed, founded expressly upon these alleged burthens, it would have been but fair at least to tell us what they are. I shall not enter upon the subject now; but this I will tell the right hon. Gentleman, that for every particular burthen he can show me as pressing upon the land. I will show him ten exemptions. Yes, ten for his one. There is one burthen that was referred to by the hon. Member for Renfrewshire, which is the land tax. I am surprised we have not yet got the returns moved for many months since relative to the land tax of other countries. What are our ambassadors and diplomatists about, that we cannot have the returns of the revenue and expenditure of foreign countries? Our own *bureaux* must be badly kept, or we ought to have this information already here in London. Being without official information, however, I will not run the risk of making a general statement, lest I should fall into error. I have, however, one document which is authentic, as it is on the authority of M. Humann, the finance minister of France; and he states that the land tax in that country is 40 per cent. on the whole revenue, and twenty-five per cent. on the revenue of the proprietors of the soil, so that in France the landowner pays 5*s.* in the pound, while, in this country you have a land tax of 1,900,000*l.* not 5 per cent. of the income, and you call for a fresh tax upon the poor man's loaf to compensate you for the heavy burthen you bear. I will tell the Prime Minister that, in laying on this tax without first stating his views on this point, he is not treating the House and the country with proper respect. I have seen, with some satisfaction, that admissions have been made, (and, indeed, it has not been denied,) that the profits of the bread tax go to the landowners. Now in all the old committees on agricultural concerns, it was alleged that it was a farmer's question, an agricultural labourer's question; and never till lately did I hear it admitted that the bread tax did contribute to the benefit of the landowners, on account of those exclusive burthens that are set up as a pretence for its continuance. Ought we not to know what these burthens were when this Corn-law was passed? Having patiently waited for twenty-five years, I think we are entitled at last to a clear explanation of the pretext upon which you tax the food of the people for the acknowledged benefit of the landowners. The right hon. Baronet tells us we must not be dependent upon foreigners for our supply, or that that dependence must be supplementary, that certain years produce enough of corn for the demand, and that we must legislate for the introduction of corn only when it is wanted. Granted. On that point the right hon. Baronet and I are perfectly agreed. Let us only legislate, if you please, for the introduction of corn, when it is wanted. Exclude it as much as you please when it is not wanted. But all I supplicate for on the part of the starving people is, that they and not you, shall be the judges of when corn is wanted. By what right do they pretend to guage the appetites and admeasure the wants of millions of people? Why, there is no despotism that ever dreamed of doing any thing so monstrous as this; yet you sit here, and presume to judge when people want food, dole out your supply when you condescend to think they want it, and stop it when you choose to consider that they have had enough. Are you in a position to judge of the wants of artisans, of hand-loom weavers? you, who never knew the want of a meal in your lives, do you presume to know when the people want bread? Why, in the course of the present debate the right hon. Baronet opposite said, that from 1832 to 1836 sufficient corn was produced at home for the population; and yet, in his last speech, he told us that there were 800,000 hand-loom weavers who in 1836 were unable to supply themselves with the commonest wants and necessaries of existence, even though they worked sixteen and eighteen hours a day. Was it not also of that period that Mr. Inglis, the traveller in Ireland, wrote, when he wound up his account of that country by the emphatic and startling declaration, that one-third part of the population perished prematurely from diseases brought on by the want of the necessaries of life? yet, in that state of things, the right hon. Baronet gravely comes forward and tells us that the country produces a sufficiency of food. I have heard other admissions too; one in particular by the right hon. Paymaster of the Forces, who said the landlords were entitled to the Corn-law to enable them to maintain a high station in the land. [Sir *E. Knatchbull:* To enable them to maintain their present station in society.] A noble Lord also (Lord Stanley) admitted that the price of food did keep up the rent of land, but did not raise wages. What does that mean, but that the rent of land is kept up at the expense of the working-classes, who are unrepresented in this House? I say that the right hon. Paymaster of the Forces, and the noble Lord, do not deal fairly with the people, for they are giving themselves an out-door relief which they deny to the poor in the union workhouses. It is not merely an extension of the pension list to the landed proprietors, as was said by the *Times* some years ago, when that paper stigmatised the Corn-laws as an extension of the pension list to the whole of the landed aristocracy; it is the worst kind of pauperism; it is the aristocracy submitting to be fed at the expense of the poorest of the poor. If this is to be so, if we are to bow our necks to a landed oligarchy, let things be as they were in ancient Venice; let the nobles inscribe their names in a golden book, and draw their money direct from the Exchequer. It would be better for the people than to suffer the aristocracy to circumscribe our trade, destroy our manufactures, and draw the money from the pockets of the poor by indirect and insidious means. Such a course would be more easy for us, and more honest for you. But have the hon. Gentlemen who maintain a system like this, considered that the people of this country are beginning to understand it a little better than they did? And do they think that the people, with a better understanding of the subject, will allow one class not only to tax the rest of the community for their own exclusive advantage, but to be living in a state of splendour upon means obtained by indirect taxation from the pockets of the poor? The right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) I apprehend knows more of the state of the country than most of his followers; and I would exhort him to bear in mind that there is a wide-spread feeling extending into every part of the country, that upon him, and him alone, will rest the responsibility of the manner in which he shall legislate upon this subject. He has now been in the possession of a great power for many months; he had due warning when he took office, of the course it would be necessary for him to pursue. He knows the existing state of commerce and manufactures. He has had ample opportunities of acquainting himself with the actual condition of the people. He is not legislating in the dark, and this I will venture to tell him, that bad as he finds trade now, he will live (if he follows out the course in which he purposes to embark, to find it much worse. I hope, sincerely hope, that he is prepared for the consequence. He has undertaken to propose a law, which, I am convinced he must be conscious is not calculated to give any extension to our trade or commerce. We have never heard of an honest English merchant coming forward to say that this law would give him a trade in corn. The corn traders alone have been appealed to, The right hon. Baronet tells us that we must force forward this dicussion, that we must proceed at once to the settlement of this question, because, forsooth, he has heard from many corn traders that it is very important that the matter should remain no longer in abeyance. If the trade in corn is still to be left in the hands of a peculiar class of dealers, in the hands of a class who are habitual gamblers, will that be an alteration of the law calculated to amend the situation of those who are engaged in the general trade and commerce of the country? Why should there be corn merchants any more than tea merchants or sugar merchants? Why should not the general merchant be enabled to bring back corn in exchange for his exports, as well as cotton, tea, or sugar? Until you pass a law enabling the merchant to make a direct exchange for corn, as well as for other commodities of foreign production, you will give no substantial relief to commerce. Nor is your law calculated to lower the price of food, You will have people amongst you maintaining the same wolfish competition to raise the price of bread, and you will have capitalists day by day struggling against bankruptcy. For this state of things the right hon. Baronet, Sir R. Peel, will be responsible. I own, indeed, that I heard in the right hon. Baronet's second speech something like an apologetic tone of reasoning; something deprecatory as to his present position, not being able to do all that he would do. That tone would be very well if the right hon. Baronet had been forced into his present position by the people, or summoned there by the Queen, then, with some shadow of fairness, he might resort to the plea that his position was a difficult one, and that he would do more if his party would permit him. But let me remind the right hon. Baronet that he sought the position he now fills, and, though I am no friend, no political partisan of the noble Lord the Member for London, (Lord J. Russell), though I have no desire to see him again in power, governed by his old opinions, this I must say, that the measure which the noble Lord proposed upon the Corn-law, though in itself not good, was still infinitely better than that of the right hon. Baronet. And I beg to call to the right hon. Baronet's mind, that if he is now placed in a situation of difficulty, that difficulty was sought by himself, and, consequently, cannot now be pleaded in extenuation of his present measure. He told us at Tamworth, that, for years and years, aye, even from the passing of the Reform Bill, he had been engaged in reconstructing his party. I presume he knew of what materials that party was composed. I presume he was not ignorant of the fact that it consisted of monopolists of every kind; monopolists of religion, monopolists of the franchise, monopolists of sugar, monopolists of corn, monopolists of timber, monopolists of coffee. These were the parties that gathered around him, and out of which he was to construct his new Parliament. They were fully alive to the occasion. They set to work to revive the old system of corruption. They bribed and they bought. Yes, they bribed, they bought, and they intimidated, until they found themselves in office, and the right hon. Baronet at their head, as their leader and champion. Did he expect that this party had expended their funds and their labour in the registration courts—for there, as the right hon. Baronet himself has stated, I believe the battle of the constitution will henceforth be fought—did he think that they had expended this labour and this money in order that they might come into office and assist him to take away their monopolies? The right hon. Baronet must have known the party he had to deal with, for he had a very old connection with them; and, therefore, I presume he was not disappointed when he came into office, having thrust out men who, with all their faults, were still far better than those who succeeded them. Having thrown those men out of office, and being unable to carry the measures which they proposed, and were ready to carry into effect, I say that he has now no right to set up the difficulty of his position as a bar to the universal condemnation which his proposition must receive in the estimation of every just politician in the country. He is the cause, yes, I say he is the cause of our present position, and upon his shoulders will the people rest the whole of the responsibility. I will now say a word to the Gentlemen on this side of the House who have such great difficulties, such bogglings and startings at the danger of giving their assent to the motion of my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton. I will say a word or two to the noble Lord the Member for London (Lord J. Russell), and to my noble and right hon. neighbours, as to the difficulties of conscience which they appear to entertain about a total and immediate repeal of the Corn-laws. I hear on this side of the House, in almost all directions, an acknowledgement of the principle for which I and others contend, that is, the principle of perfect freedom in the trade in corn. But there are some of my noble and right hon. neighbours who think that there should be a duty on corn for the purposes of revenue. How can there be a duty for revenue unless it be a duty for protection? I ask my noble and right hon. neighbours who entertain that view of the subject to reconsider it before they go to a division. With that word of advice to those who sit near me, I proceed to make a remark in reference to the little word "now," about which many Gentlemen on this side of the House seem also to feel a considerable difficulty. There are Gentlemen here who think that the Corn-laws ought to be repealed, but they cannot reconcile themselves to the immediate repeal of them. They do not like to repeal them "now." "We admit," say they, "the injustice which these laws inflict upon upwards of 25,000,000 of the people for the advantage of a select few; but inasmuch as some thousands of persons have a beneficial interest in this wrong inflicted upon the millions, we cannot suddenly deprive them of the advantage they possess." Now, with all due deference to Gentlemen who use that argument, I must be permitted to say that I think they are showing a very great sympathy for the few who are gaining, and vastly little sympathy indeed for the many who are suffering from the operation of these laws. I would put it to those Gentlemen, whether if it had been in their power, immediately after the passing of the Corn-law in 1815, to repeal that law, they would have given any compensation to the landed interest in the shape of an eight or ten years' diminishing duty upon the importation of foreign grain? No; they would have repealed them at once. Then, I ask, do they think that twenty-seven years' possession of the wrong—twenty seven years of exclusive advantage—twenty-seven years of injustice to the rest of the community, entitles this interested and selfish party to increase its demand in the shape of compensation? I give the hon. Gentlemen who are near me credit for being quite sincere in their scruples. I have heard such scruples very often expressed before; but I once heard them met at a public meeting of electors, in what appeared to me to be a very satisfactory manner. There was great difficulty on the platform among the Whig gentlemen who were assembled there about the repeal of the Corn-laws, and they were arguing about the danger and hardship of an immediate repeal of them. They were at length interrupted by a sturdy labouring man in a fustian coat, who called out, "Whoi, mun! where's the trouble of taking them off? you put them on all of a ruck;" meaning, that they had been put on all of a sudden. And so they were. The law was passed without notice in 1815, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the people. Then, I say, let us abolish this law, and the sooner the better. I will not trespass further upon the patience of the House. I consider that this question is now drawn within such narrow limits as to depend upon these two points; "Are you, the landed interest, able to show that you are subjected to exclusive burdens? If so, then the way to relieve you is not to put taxes on the rest of the community, but to remove your burdens. Secondly, are you prepared to carry out even-handed justice to the people? If not, your law will not stand; nay, your House itself, if based upon injustice, will not stand."

Mr. *Ferrand* spoke as follows:*—Sir, it would be folly, as well as ingratitude, on my part, if I were to attempt to take advantage of the kind indulgence I have already received at the hands of this House. I hope, however, that hon. Gentlemen will bear with me for a short time, when they recollect that during the last ten days I have been made the target at which all the Gentlemen opposite have aimed their pointless darts. I have even been constrained to exclaim when attacked by an hon. Member on this side of the House, "*tu quoque Brute*;" but folded in the mantle of truth, I have come out of the conflict unscathed. It is true that the hon. Gentleman, the Member for the Tower Hamlets (Sir W. Clay), came down the night after I had addressed the House, and said that if he possessed the ability of replying to me he would not do so, as it might injure his support of the party behind him; he left me, he said, in the hands of the right hon. Baronet, (Sir Robert Peel), and he wished him joy of of me. The right hon. Baronet shall never have my support, unless I think it my duty to give it; and I shall seek no other reward than an approving conscience. But great, indeed, must have been the services of the hon. Baronet, when the late disinterested, patriotic, self-denying, no patronage Government, did not hesitate to confer on him the same badge of honour, which a gallant officer (Sir H. Hardinge) sitting on the Treasury bench, had only obtained after the loss of limb and blood, and after fighting his way in every battle field, from the fruitless victory of Corunna to the crowning and triumphant one of Waterloo. Next among my assailants came the hon. Member for Sheffield (Mr. Ward) with all the blushing modesty for which he is so much distinguished—with all that tone of positive authority, by which he has become so notorious; he declared that my speech was one of scandalous levity. Fortunately for me, the hon. and gallant Member for Wycombe (Mr. Bernal) came forward and personally contradicted him, and told the House that it was bombastic declamation. That being the case, I shall leave those two hon. Members to settle the matter in dispute; and only offer up a fervent prayer that it may be amicably arranged. I now come to the hon. Member for Salford (Mr. Brotherton), and I do ask the kind indulgence of the House, whilst I vindicate myself from as despicable a quibble as ever man was guilty of. The hon. Member said that "if he were to judge of my speech and the correctness of it by what he knew to be untrue, he certainly should not value it very highly. He knew that some parts of it were utterly destitute of foundation. He heard me make the assertion that the hon. Member for Stockport, (Mr. Cobden) worked his mills night and day, and that he had made a large fortune by such abominable cruelty; he heard the hon. Member make that statement; and for the hon. Member's information, he begged to tell him that the hon. Member for Stockport never had a mill in his life." Now, I instantly gave the hon. Member my authority for the statement I had made. [“*No, no.*”] I placed my authority in the hands of the House, and said, if the name were demanded, I would instantly give it, but I was met by loud cries of "no" by the Gentlemen on this side of the House, which was most generously responsed to from yours. Scarcely had five minutes elapsed before the hon. Member for Salford left the House. I followed him, and said, "Now, then, in private, I will give you the name of my authority, the date of his letter, and the place of his abode." I did so. I read to him in private what I had stated publicly in the House. He laughingly turned away, and said, "Ah, but we call them print-works in Lancashire and not mills." In justice to my authority I hope the House will allow me to read only four lines from a letter which he has written to me since. He says, "I notice in the papers this evening that the rev. Mr. Brotherton contradicted your statement of Mr. Cobden's having worked his mills night and day; but I know he will not deny that he worked his print-works at Chorley night and day." I now come to the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. Leader). He declared that I had made an incendiary speech in this House. What! this from the hon. Member for Westminster, the champion of the liberties of the people!—the Gentleman who asserts that all our legislation here is class legislation, and that the working classes are not represented! Is it in this way that I am to be met by such a man, when I come here and deliver a message from the working classes, and assert in their names in the presence of the assembled House of Commons, that the Corn-laws are not the cause of their distress, but that it is caused by the persecution and oppression of their masters? But what said the hon. Member for Westminster? Why, that if what I had asserted was true, it was my duty to call for a committee. Sir, this House has been in committee many days. I brought my charge before those Gentlemen who state themselves to be the representatives of the Anti-Corn-law League, and which of them has ventured to deny the accuracy of my statements? It is true that the hon. Member for Salford did, but I have shewn in what way; and he was the only one. And what, let me ask, are the people, the working-people of England, to say to this silence? Has it not caused a sensation throughout the length and breadth of the land—a sensation which has destroyed the Anti-Corn-law League, and compelled the leaguers to coalesce with the Chartists? Yes, you feel that the only means of retaining your existence—the only means of agitating the question of Corn-law repeal, is to coalesce with a party who hate you in their hearts, to coalesce with a party who—if you do urge them on to open rebellion, as you are striving to do, I warn you, and you know it is true—will first bury their bayonets in the bosoms of those whom they know to be their oppressors. Let me tell you that there is force and strength sufficient in this country to make you quail before it. I would call the hon. Member for Westminster's attention to a letter which I have received from a poor working man—one of the right sort—a man who gives me his name, and tells me to use it; and perhaps the House will oblige me by allowing me to read a few lines from it [" *Read all.*"] I shall do so with pleasure. My correspondent says,

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* From a corrected report.

" Sir, I hope when you have read this you will pardon the liberty I have taken in addressing it to you. The speech which you delivered on Monday has caused more sensation than any that was made during the whole debate." [" *Laughter*"]

Let not hon. Members opposite imagine that I claim for myself the credit of this sensation—that I arrogate to myself the possession of talents like those which rest upon the Treasury Bench: no—it is not my speech, but it is the truths I have uttered, the facts I have stated in that speech have caused this sensation.

" Because (says this working man) we all have witnessed similar transactions to those you then related, and many working men have experienced worse treatment than you have described. Nobody has ventured here to deny your assertions. The 'Leaguers' are raging at their exposure. But I should not have troubled you had not Mr. Bernal doubted your statements respecting the Anti-Corn-law petitions. Why, in Leeds, on several occasions, the Leaguers have been defeated by the Chartists at public meetings. The very number of signatures to the petitions prove them to be forgeries. In the township of Leeds, which contains about 7,000 inhabitants, it is said that no less than 43,000 signatures have been obtained, and in the whole borough, (including the women's petition, 23,000) no less than 66,000 signatures or nearly the half of the population of all ages. Besides this fact (I have a rather extended circle of acquaintance) I meet with numbers who are indifferent to, numbers who are positively opposed to the Whig scheme—numbers who are favourable to the repeal, who will not sign any petition whatever. The petitions have been hawked round the machine shops and factories. They have been placed in all parts of the town; men have been engaged to go from house to house with cheap bread petitions. One young man, by name Robert Whitehead, who came to work in the same room as myself the day after the petitions were closed, informed me that from Monday morning to Tuesday noon he procured 850 names, for which he was paid 8*s.* 6*d.*, at the rate of 1*s.* per 100. In one yard, which the printed statistics of the borough states to contain thirty-four houses, this man says he obtained near 300 names. This man is a repealer, and a pretty fair informed man, and no doubt could tell how hundreds of sham signatures were obtained. I could fill sheets with incidents which have been related to me, but I forbear, merely assuring these are facts which I can prove."

Sir, I have another letter from another correspondent. [" *Name.*"] No, I will not give the name now, but I will give it to any hon. Member who will apply to me when the House has adjourned. He says—

" In all parts of the manufacturing districts in which I have been, I have heard the working classes declare that it is the truth you have told them in the House, and that if you wanted any to corroborate what you have said, you might have hundreds of thousands to affirm it. I will now put you in possession of a fact in the way and manner in which the Anti-Corn-law League manufacture their petitions. The other day I called upon one manufacturer to ask him to sign the petition in favour of the Ten Hours'

Bill. He was in a room filled with power-looms, and he heard me say 'petition;' he instantly said 'Yes,' and went across the yard into his counting-house, and lifted up the lid of his desk, took out a petition, and said, 'Now you see, I think I have done it pretty well. I have varied my hand as much as possible, and I have put them all down, for I have taken them out of the wage-book.'"

Now, what think you of the manner in which your petitions are got up? When detailing the other night the misery, the oppression, the plunder, and robbery, committed on the poor by the Anti-Corn-law League manufacturers, I brought under the notice of the House the evils of the truck system. I have since received some further information upon that subject. But before I read to the House a statement which will make it stand aghast. ["*Laughter.*"] Yes, it will have that effect upon any hon. Member who has a heart to feel for the sufferings of the poor. I wish once more to assert, in the presence of this House, that I never did charge these crimes upon the whole manufacturers of England, but I distinctly charge them upon those manufacturers who are members of the Anti-Corn-law League. I have been told by many manufacturers in my own neighbourhood—as honourable men as ever lived, and of whose society I am proud,—I have been told by them, time after time, that they cannot compete with the Anti-Corn-law League manufacturers, because it is their practice to pay their mens' wages in money, and not in goods. I will now give a sketch of some cases of the most flagitious nature which are now occurring in an isolated part of Lancashire. "Messrs. Blank and Son"—["*Name.*"] I again tell hon. Members, that I am prepared to prove every thing which I assert. If any hon. Member will move for a committee, I pledge myself to summon witnesses to prove every word of what I am going to read: but I trust that, under present circumstances, the House will agree with me, that it will not be fair to give to the world the names of the parties—

"Messrs. —— and Son, ——, three mills. There is a shop in the immediate vicinity of each of these mills, and each shop is kept by a son-in-law for his own advantage. The work-people are also supplied with coals by the same firm.—Mr. ——, two mills The work-people are obliged to procure both food and clothing at a shop in the neighbourhood of the mills, which is kept by his brother for his own benefit.—Mr. ——, one mill, close to which is a shop, over the door of which his son's name is placed, who is a minor residing with his father.—Messrs. —— and Co. one mill. They have a shop which is kept for their own benefit.—Mr. ——, one mill, near which a shop is kept by his son-in-law, for his own benefit, who is also manager of the mill. There are five more mills in this very neighbourhood which have cottages attached to them, and belonging to the owners, and which are occupied by their work-people."

[*Loud cries of* "*Name*"] I do not wonder at these interruptions, for "the flesh will quiver when the pincers tear." In order to make Members aware of the manner in which these manufacturers evaded the penalties of the law, I will state how they arrange matters. On Saturday, the people go into a room to receive their wages. They are paid at the time in money, but instead of retiring by the door through which they enter, they have to pass into another room, in which sits a person who keeps the books of the truck-shop, and to whom the workmen have to pay every farthing that they have expended during the previous week in goods and clothing; and if it is proved that any one of the men has purchased one single farthing's worth of goods from any other shop than that which belongs to his master, he is without one word of explanation discharged. Now this is taxing the food of the poor—this is taxing their provisions, and their clothing—this is your Free-Trade system. It is a notorious fact, that the master manufacturers clear 25 per cent. by the goods they sell to their workmen, and 10 per cent. above the usual rent, by the cottages in which these workmen are compelled to reside. A key is placed in the hands of each man who applies for and obtains work at any of these mills, and it is well understood that that is the key of a cottage built by his master, who will not let it to him under 10 per cent. above the usual rent, nor give him employment unless he takes it. This then is the glorious system of free trade, under which the Anti-Corn-law League manufacturers stand up in the House of Commons, and exclaim, "before us the landed interest shall fall!" I now come to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Macaulay). That right hon. Gentleman said that the Anti-Corn-law League had never used such violent language out of doors as I had used within the walls of Parliament. I will read a few passages which I have extracted from some of the speeches of the Anti-Corn-law League orators, and then leave the House to judge which has been most violent, they or I. The right hon. Member will perhaps permit me to call his attention to the language uttered by an individual at a meeting of the Anti-Corn-law Delegates, in allusion to the right hon. Baronet at the head of her Majesty's Government. I am convinced that, however hon. Members opposite may differ from the right hon. Baronet in political opinions, they will, with a generous and a manly spirit, bear record that he does not deserve the slander I am about to read to the House. Mr. G. Thompson says, alluding to the Corn Law:—

> "Cursed law, doubling the primeval curse, turning the warm sweat of industry into the chill damp of starvation. He denounced that law. It was an impious law. But this wicked man (Sir R. Peel), the law-maker, the landed aristocrat, had virtually monopolized the universal bounty of God, and we starve in consequence of it."

Colonel Thompson says,

> "He should himself conscientiously and with integrity advocate the taking a large retribution on the landlords: how many would follow him depended on them, not on himself."

My opinion is, that if the people wait till the hon. and gallant Colonel attempts to "take" this retribution, they will have to wait a considerable time. I will now read to the House a speech delivered at a meeting of the Anti-Corn-law League by the hon. Member who has just sat down, and I wish the right hon. Gentleman the member for Edinburgh (Mr. Macaulay) had been present, that he might hear this language. When 100,000 men threatened to come down from Birmingham to this metropolis—for which they received the thanks of the Noble Lord, the Member for London, (Lord J. Russell)—Lord Grey said to the House of Lords, "Set your House in order, for the people are coming down upon you." I think I may also say to the hon. Members of this House, "Set your House in order, for the hon. Member is coming down upon you." The hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Cobden) thus appeals to the passions of the people:—

> "Their metal would be tried in a fortnight or three weeks. He had told them that the aristocracy must be frightened. Were they prepared to make sacrifices and to undergo suffering to carry this question? The time was not far off when they might be called upon to make sacrifices, and to undergo sufferings. The time might soon come when they might be called upon to inquire, as Christian men, whether an oligarchy which has usurped the Government—placed its foot on the Crown, and trampled down the people—how far such an oligarchial usurpation was deserving of their moral and religious support. If they were prepared for suffering they would soon have an opportunity of suffering. When the proper time should come, he would be prepared to set them an example of suffering, to suffer with them."

Sir,—when I read that speech I trembled from head to foot. I will detain the House but for a few minutes, in order that I may tell them in what way the Anti-Corn-law League themselves enhance the price of corn. Are hon. Gentlemen aware that, by a calculation, it has been found that no lest than 100,000 quarters of wheat are annually used by these men. [" *How?*"] How? by daubing their calicoes with flour paste. The country ought to know how these men defraud the people, and they ought to be made aware that it is by tricks like those that they have lost the foreign market. I could undertake to prove to the House, by the testimony of manufacturers of the highest standing in the country, that a system of robbery and plunder was carried on against the people, such as had never before been heard of. It was only the other day that a poor man was sentenced to be transported for seven years, for sending to the noble Lord the Secretary for the Colonies a quantity of bricks, pretending that the package contained a chandelier. This was a fraud on a private individual; but if the House will grant me a committee, I will undertake to prove far greater frauds practised against the public. I have received the following statement from an individual who, as well as others, is ready to give evidence on the subject before a committee of this House, if required to do so:—

> "Immense quantities of flour are used in the cotton trade, to give a false appearance to the calico." [" *Oh!*"]

I assure the House it is true. I assert the fact, and I ask hon. Gentlemen opposite, who are acquainted with the cotton trade, whether it is not true. My informant proceeds—

> "Some manufacturers use from 2,000 to 3,000 sacks per annum. The calicoes are passed through a machine by which they are stretched in length and breadth. The inter-

stices occasioned by stretching are filled up by paste, which is applied by a brush. Afterwards the calico is passed between two rollers, which press or calender it. It then comes out apparently a beautiful fine stout piece of calico. Its real quality is discovered in washing, after both the purchase money and the expense of making it into wearing-apparel has proved it to be a dead loss to the confiding purchaser."

I will now, with the permission of the House, read an extract from a letter written by an English merchant, exposing a process which is adopted by certain manufacturers, of buying up all the old rags they can obtain, which are torn into pieces by a machine, thus converted into a kind of dust, and are then mixed with wool, which is eventually manufactured into cloth. This dust, from its nauseous nature, and from its engendering numerous diseases, has been christened by the manufacturers and workpeople of Yorkshire the "Devil's dust." The Gentleman to whom I refer, writes:—

"Things are worse and worse in Huddersfield; and it seems that all is over without any hope. The trade is leaving this country most rapidly. S—— is paying off nearly 200 of his weavers, because the foreigners are sending the same sorts of goods over at very little more than half the price that he has been selling them at. I wish you could get a full account of this shoddy trade; it is monstrous. They now put scarcely any wool into their yarn, only just as much as will keep the devil's dust together. The rags, as you know, are collected from the most filthy holes in London and Dublin, and are brought from the most unhealthy regions, infected by the plague and every epidemic, and of course, they are full of deadly poison. B—— S—— has had a boat-load of this rubbish, and also buys a good deal of the Dewsbury people. When his goods are made up, the first time they are worn they split up, and then the game begins. Mr. —— informs me that B—— S—— has sent out a large quantity of 'doeskins,' charged 5*s*. 9*d*. per yard, which have proved to be not worth one farthing—not worth tailor's wages. They will all be sent back from America to the manufacturer, with a charge of 5*s*. 8*d*. a yard upon them for duty, carriage, freight, commission, &c.; and this, of course, besides the loss of the goods, they being worthless. If this won't cure him, I cannot tell what will. Mr. —— has been on the continent recently, and there he saw a small manufactory of 'doeskins,' all made of wool, no devil's dust in them. The man, before this season, he believes, had never made eighteen pieces of goods in one year. He had then in hand an order for 1,800 pieces, considerably below the price of English devil's dust goods, pretending to be of the same quality. Thus the manufacture is leaving us as fast as it can—thanks to the knavery of our avaricious, covetous, cheating, canting selves. Nothing can show our baseness and deceit more than this. These things prove clearly that our ruin is deservedly brought upon us by our own villany. It is well known that the Sheffielders passed cast-iron cutlery upon the foreigners for steel, until they would not have it given; and they have had to find new countries to send it to, and their former customers have been obliged to manufacture for themselves. Thus our canting, professing Christians, are ruining their own country, and cheating the poor pagans, and all the while blubbering about 'trusting in Providence,' and are trying to make Parliament believe that they care for the poor!"

I will only detain the House a few moments longer (the hon. Gentleman continued), while I call their attention to a meeting of manufacturers which was held some years ago in New York. The proceedings were reported at the time in all the American papers, and I will, with the permission of the House, give a slight account of it as described by an eye-witness. He says:—

"It was my good luck to attend a meeting of merchants and manufacturers convened in the Town-hall, for the purpose of 'considering the best means of protecting the manufacturers of the United States.' The meeting was composed of manufacturers of all grades, and very numerously attended; and a spirit of unanimity pervaded the assembly. Specimens of cloth of John Bull's manufacture were held up to the gaze of the meeting all in tatters, and moth-eaten by the paste. These were compared with their own honest domestic manufacture, and the following resolution was agreed to:—'That it is the opinion of this meeting that it is the duty of Congress to protect the manufactures of the United States by an augmentation of the present tariff, to prohibit, as far as possible, the importation of foreign manufactures.'"

I will now, Sir, in conclusion, call the attention of the right hon. Baronet, the First Lord of the Treasury, to a fact which has not been brought before the notice of the House, yet a most important fact. It is this; if the Corn-laws were to be repealed there would be an immense body of industrious farmers and labourers in the North of England not only thrown out of employment, but entirely ruined. That ruin would result from this cause:—It has been for many years the custom of the chief landed proprietors in the North to let pieces of waste land to small farmers and labourers on leases of fourteen, twenty-one, or thirty years, at a small rent, on condition that they shall break up the land, and repay themselves by the sale of the corn which they may produce from it. Now, if the Corn-laws were to be repealed, all these men must be ruined; yet they have as much right to protection from the country as hon. Members opposite have, and they look to the Government to protect them, in order that they may reap some slight reward for their labour. They never dream that they can possess such wealth as those Gentlemen opposite; they say, "Live and let live;" that is all they aspire to. Then why refuse them such an offer? They say "We have let you live—we would scorn to rob you of your own, and it is unjust, cruel, unmanly, nay, dishonourable, and unworthy of the name of Englishmen, to come forward and advocate a measure, the object of which is to plunder the poor." The hon. Member for Manchester, who spoke the night before last, offered his advice to the farmers of England. If the farmers of England look to the political consistency of the hon. Member for Manchester (Mr. Gibson), they will not place much confidence in that advice; but the farmers of England look to the laws of their country for protection; and when they lose that protection, depend upon it, if they fall, you will fall with them.

Mr. *Brotherton* said, in explanation, that every one who knew him would believe him when he said that he did not use the expression attributed to him in any ambiguous sense. When he stated that he believed the hon. Member for Stockport never had a mill in his life, he meant to use the word in its common acceptation. In speaking of mills the word was generally understood as meaning cotton or woollen mills. He had no wish to deceive the House. Had he made use of any word calculated to convey a wrong idea to the House, he would never hesitate to retract or to explain it; but, in the present case, he could assure them that he made use of the word in the above sense in perfect good faith, and in the full belief that what he stated was true. He had no doubt, if the hon. Member for Knaresborough would give the House the name of his correspondent, that he would be found to be one of his (Mr. Brotherton's) political opponents. He would not return railing for railing, and, though he had seen two letters regarding the hon. Member's character in his own neighbourhood, yet he would never deign to make any use of them. He begged again to state, that in making the statement he had done, he had no intention to deceive the House, and with that declaration he left the matter in their hands.

Mr. *Cobden* rose, amid cries of "explain." He said that he might state once for all that he did not think that his mission to that House was for the purpose of indulging in gross personalities. He assured those hon. Gentlemen who so ingeniously devised a partisan warfare of so very clever a kind that he would never be driven into personal altercation with any hon. Member, for he felt that to do so would be disrespectful to those that sent him there. He trembled for the dignity of the House when he found language used such as that which they had been listening to. He did consider the dignity of the House in some danger when he found language such as that they had been listening to for the last half hour received with so much complacency by hon. Gentlemen on the front bench opposite, and with such cheers by the party behind them.

Mr. *Hindley* felt some difficulty in addressing the House after the very spicy speech of the hon. Member for Knaresborough, because he knew that hon. Members were not much inclined after the excitement of a personal attack to listen with patience to the dry discussion of the question before them. He would not notice the assertions of the hon. Member for Knaresborough, but since the hon. Member had proclaimed himself to be the advocate of the working classes, he hoped that in future he would show more judgment in their behalf; otherwise he would betray their cause. In entering on the question of the Corn-laws, he did not mean to treat it as a party question. It was not his intention to attack the agricultural interest as a more selfish portion of the community than any other; nor did he wish to argue that the Corn-laws ought to be repealed because of the existing distress. He considered that the arguments for or against the Corn-law were irrespective, either of the prosperity or adversity of the country; and he thought that the agricultural interest might just as well make use of the prosperity of the country as a proof of the benefits of the Corn-law, as the manufacturing interest might make use of adversity as a proof of the evils of it. The right hon. Baronet, the Member for Tamworth, had not, he thought, looked to all the effects of the existing Corn-law, more particularly to its effects on the condition of the labourer. As illustrative of the evil effects of a rise in the price of corn, he begged to refer the right hon. Baronet to a calculation made by Mr. Nield, the mayor of Manchester, relative to the condition of the family of the working man at Manchester, showing the income and expenditure of twelve of the best paid families and artisans in Manchester, and seven in Dukinfield, in 1836 and in 1841 :—

> " The total income of the twelve families in Manchester was the same in the two years, viz. 22*l.* 4*s.* 2*d.* a week. Their weekly household expenditure, in 1836, was 14*l.* 15*s.* 11*d.*, leaving a surplus of 7*l.* 8*s.* 3*d.* for education, saving, and the purchase of manufactured articles. In 1841, their weekly expenditure was 17*l.* 9*s.* 8*d.*, leaving only 4*l.* 14*s.* 6*d.* for education, saving, and the purchase of manufactured articles, In the former year, food formed 54 per cent. of their expenditure; in the latter, 70 per cent. The total weekly income of the seven families in Dukinfield was, in 1836, 8*l.* Their household expenditure was 5*l.* 12*s.* 3*d.*; leaving a surplus of 2*l.* 7*s.* 9*d.* for education, saving, and clothing. In 1841, their aggregate income was reduced to 5*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*, while their necessary expenditure increased to 6*l.* 8*s.* 1*d.*; leaving not only no surplus for clothing, but a heavy debt instead. In the former year, food formed 46 per cent. of their expenditure; in the latter year, 89 per cent."

Now, supposing that a like reduction took place generally, he thought that this would account in a very great degree for the distress in the manufacturing districts. The Corn-law being the cause of the high price of wheat, had of course great influence in producing the distress. He believed the Corn-law to be unjust in principle, and contrary to the laws of God and nature. He contended that the Legislature had no right to act contrary to those laws, and in support of this doctrine he quoted the opinion of Chief Justice Holt and other authorities. Blackstone said, that on the two foundations of the law of nature and revelation must depend all human law. This was the ground taken by the ministers of religion in opposing the Corn-laws. They considered them opposed to the laws of nature, and therefore believed themselves justified in denouncing them. It was doubling the primeval curse, to deny the labourer the power of obtaining the best return for his labour. To do so was contrary to common sense and justice, and to persevere in this denial would infallibly tend to weaken the fabric of the constitution. He had been much struck with an observation of the rev. Dr. Chalmers in reference to the causes and to the evils attendant on the question remaining unsettled. That rev. Gentleman stated, that he knew of no topic better calculated to create clamour and discontent, and that nothing could be a greater blessing to the labourer than its repeal. He felt surprised that the Vice-President of the Board of Trade did not allude to the effect of the sliding scale in draining this country of bullion during a deficient harvest, because, in his opinion, this part of the question deserved their deepest consideration. Hon. Gentlemen opposite had endeavoured to impress on the working people that low prices would bring low wages. He did not altogether agree with them in this respect, yet he would admit that in all thickly-populated countries the wages of the lowest class of labourers must depend on the price of the means of subsistence? but whose fault was it that this country was over populated? Why could not the labouring population avail themselves of the rich lands of America? He was also opposed to the Corn-law in consequence of the artificial increase which it gave to machinery, and to the improvement of machinery. He never heard of machinery being introduced except for the purpose of superseding human labour, and the manufacturers had almost been driven to favour the introduction of machinery, in consequence of its relative cheapness to human labour. He thought that the Corn-laws had given a great stimulus to the employment of machinery, and from the introduction of it sprung all the distress of the hand-loom weavers—of those 800,000 individuals to whose hard case the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department had referred. In the year 1835, at the time the right hon. Baronet opposite was in power, the hon. Member for Oldham (Mr. Fielden) had called his attention to the condition of these 800,000 individuals, and Mr. Muggeridge was sent down to Manchester to inquire into their condition. On that occasion the right hon. Gentleman did not speak; but he voted against the motion, and his hon. Friend and himself divided in a minority of 3 against 150, and the House thus refused to take into consideration the condition of 800,000 hand-loom weavers. If the motion of his hon. Friend had been agreed to, much mischief would have been avoided, for soon after that time great numbers of persons, previously engaged in agricultural pursuit, were brought from distant parts to supply the demand for labour in the manufacturing districts, while the condition of the hand-loom weavers was passed over; and yet hon. Gentlemen opposite at the present day fruitlessly complained of the condition of that body of persons. He was satisfied that if there had been no mills this country might have continued to have grown corn, and exported it in consequence of the lowness of prices, and it was clear that the agriculturists never could have obtained the high prices which they now did. He had presented a petition a few days ago from a labouring man, who stated in it that he could only now obtain for six days' labour what he formerly procured for one day's work. Was not this equivalent to a deprivation of this man's property? What would a landowner say, who had an estate which brought him in a rental of 30,000*l.* in 1815, only giving him an income of 5,000*l.* a year at the present time, and this being occasioned by the vicious system of legislation which obtained in the country? He did not find fault with the adoption of machinery, as he believed that it had conferred very great benefits on the community when properly regulated. If, however, the use of it was allowed in manufactures, why not carry out the principle? Suppose, for instance, there was a machine invented for growing corn for the whole kingdom—and this was not more improbable than the invention of the Daguerrotype would have appeared to be ten years ago—if it came into operation last August, would not the right hon. Baronet have been called upon to provide a remedy? The landed interest would not allow the use of a machine which would be in the slightest degree prejudicial to themselves; for that was the case when they prevented the importation of foreign corn. If we could in this country provide goods by machinery, which we could exchange for corn in a foreign market, what was the difference from making corn from a machine? The landed interest said that the adoption of an open trade in corn with foreign countries would be injurious to the labourers and capitalists engaged in agricultural pursuits; they thus, as it were, prevented the working of a machine when employed against themselves, but they never thought of interrupting machinery which interfered so materially with the interests of 800,000 hand-loom weavers. It was said that the agriculturists were exposed to peculiar burdens, which did not fall upon any other class of the community. He entertained that opinion himself three years ago, and was prepared to agree that they should have protection to an equivalent amount, and he had offended some of his constituents by saying so. He had since then more closely looked into the matter, and he confessed that he had great difficulty in finding what they could be. The right hon. Baronet said the other evening, that political economists could not agree as to what were the burdens which fell peculiarly upon land; but he (Mr. Hindley) contended that when the House was called upon to legislate upon a question like the present, it should previously determine what those burdens were. Mr. Macintosh, who was quoted as a great authority on this subject, said that land paid certain taxes which fell upon it, which might amount at the very utmost to about 5*s.* a quarter. Mr. Tooke, who investigated the subject with great minuteness, said that those taxes could not amount to more than 1*s.* a quarter in the price of corn. Now he was quite sure that the Corn-law league would willingly make the landed interest a present of 1*s.* a quarter upon all corn to get rid of the restrictive system. He really believed that the amount was not equal to this, for the malt tax, and other charges which had been specified, fell upon the consumer, and the only charge which he could find which might be said to fall upon them was the land-tax, which was not more than 1,400,000*l.* a year; but on the other side there was the probate and legacy duty, amounting to 2,900,000*l.* which surely might be considered as a set-off. Therefore he said that the balance was on the other side. If an article of necessity was scarce, the consumption of it did not so much depend on the price as on the means of the purchasers. If there was a free trade in corn in this country, the price would only become very high when there was an universal scarcity, for the consumers of corn in England were richer than they were in any other country. He felt that a fixed duty was much less odious and oppressive than a fluctuating duty; but carrying the name of duty, which was equivalent to that of a tax, created a feeling against it. Who, he should like to know, could calculate on the effect of a fluctuating duty in the price of bread to a labouring man, for it prevented the article which he manufactured from being sent to the continent to be exchanged for food? He had always entertained a respect and regard for the aristocracy of England, and he wished to see them maintained in all their social relations, and to lead the battle for the liberties and happiness of mankind; and miserable would that day be when the great body of them exercised the power they possessed against the welfare of the country. The inevitable effect of their misconduct must be, that they would be crushed. He hoped that they would pause before they persisted in a course which must be attended with injury to all classes, and he trusted that they would so act for the honour and safety of the country that they would secure by their wise legislation the peace, the happiness, and the welfare of all classes of the community.

Mr. *Gill* thought that a total repeal of the Corn-laws would be not only unjust to the landed interest, but injurious to the community at large. He was indisposed to aid in the total abolition of protecting duties upon the importation of foreign grain, because he had reason to believe that all the duty below *5s.* per quarter found its way into the pocket of the speculator and the foreign merchant. His reasons for dissenting from the proposition of the right hon. Baronet were—first, because of the immense absorption of capital in this country by the continued high prices of corn for and during the greater part of the latter ten years, which in his opinion was sufficient to account for the want of adequate enterprise and speculation in other branches of our national industry, and consequently for the distress which had been so generally felt in the manufacturing classes of society during that period; and, secondly, because he felt the public would be better supplied with corn under a fixed duty, which would tend to establish a steady trade in corn, and a constant supply in our own ports of corn ready to make up all deficiencies in the crops of home-grown corn. He was bound at the same time to confess he should have preferred a 10*s.* duty per quarter for the first year, declining a shilling per annum until it reached *5s.*, when it should become a permanent duty. This he should prefer, he acknowledged, to either the plan of the noble Lord, or that of the right hon. Baronet. He was almost afraid to trust himself to say anything further at that late hour, and he would sit down by expressing a hope that at least we should have a modification of the measure which had been introduced by the right hon. Baronet.

Mr. *Fielden* was understood to say that, notwithstanding all he had heard in the course of this debate, he was not one of those who were of opinion that it was better for England to rely upon foreign countries for its supply of corn than upon its own native industry. There was no doubt that at present we did not grow enough corn for the home consumption; though there was an abundance of land and an abundance of labour, which he believed were the only requisites necessary to raise a sufficiency of corn for the people. The agricultural interest had asked protection, and they had had it for the last twenty-six years, the protection they claimed being necessary, as was said, to enable them to grow the corn that was required. But they had not produced a sufficiency. Could they then any longer be considered entitled to protection, now that the question was raised whether they ought to have protection or not? He said they were not so entitled. It was urged that the manufacturers had produced too much, but certainly that was not an argument which could be used against the agriculturists. The manufacturers had produced too much, and that was a fault; but the agriculturists were more in error than they, for they had been producing too little. The Corn-law was so framed that the people could not be supplied with enough of food, and he believed it was the intention of the framers of that law, and the object of those who supported it, to prevent the growth of a sufficient quantity of home produce for the wants of the people. If it were necessary the agricultural interest should have protection, he would have been willing to grant it, even from the year 1815, provided they had given him the assurance that they would grow enough corn; but that assurance was not given then, nor had it been since given. They would not grow enough food themselves, nor would they allow other countries to supply the deficiency in exchange for our manufactures. He asked was it not a disgrace to the Legislature that at this moment there should be located in one spot in this country upwards of 17,000 people who were starving? These people were poor, and therefore neglected and despised; and when employed, what were they engaged in fabricating? Why the articles which were used to ornament the persons of the wives and daughters of the landed interest. Whilst these 17,000 persons on one spot were starving for want of the necessaries of life, what was the conduct of the Ministers of the Crown? Why, the right hon. Baronet came down to the House and told them that he held out no hope for the relief of the distresses of the people, and that if such a hope were encouraged, the expectations of the people would be disappointed. He (Mr. Fielden) contended that the working classes of this country had not been dealt fairly by. In 1834, a bill was introduced to this House, the object of which was to throw every working man in England upon his own resources. [*Much noise.*] He begged to remind the House that this was the first time he had risen to take part in the debates on this subject, and he thought it was only fair that, as the representative of a manufacturing district, he should be heard. In 1834, then, they passed an act to throw every working man on his own resources, and virtually repealed that Poor-law upon which the poor had built their hopes for ages. Was it fair dealing with the poor man, then, after having repealed that law, to enact another law to limit his resources and prevent his obtaining bread? Were they treating him fairly, when they restricted his means of subsistence, and then required that he should pay double the price for his bread that was paid in foreign countries? He considered that he should be doing wrong if he voted for the continuance of the protection at present enjoyed by the landholders, and he should, therefore give his support to the motion of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton; and his principal reason for doing so was, because the landed aristocracy, having thrown the poor man upon his own resources, had totally deprived themselves of all right to a continuance of the protection which they at present enjoyed.

General *Johnson* would vote for the motion of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton on the principle that the food of man was not a fit subject for taxation, and he voted in this instance completely against his own interest, as his sole dependence was upon land. He would only trouble the House with one further observation, and that related to what had been said last evening by the hon. and gallant Member for Donegal, who had warned the House to beware of taking away the protection now afforded to agriculture, as the consequence would be to injure the Irish peasantry very seriously. He begged to ask the hon. and gallant Member whether he really was of opinion that it was in the power of the House, by any effort of human ingenuity, to invent a law by which the condition of the working classes in Ireland could be rendered worse than it now was?

Mr. *Villiers* rose to reply. He said the House might be assured, after so much discussion, he would not abuse the right which he believed belonged to him to make some reply to the observations which had been made upon his motion. If the length of the discussion and the hour of the night did not prevent it, it would still be utterly impossible, in the state of the House, since the delivery of the speech by the hon. Member for Knaresborough, to enter calmly and deliberately into the question. It was a speech for which he could hardly blame the Speaker; for it was clear that it was one that precisely suited the taste of the House. The House was convulsed with delight at it. It was a speech which cast the bitterest reflections on the manufacturers of this country—nay, more, it brought against them the strongest charges which could be brought against any class of men—a speech which certainly misrepresented most grossly the objects and motives of those who brought forward this question, and so far as it concerned him and his friends; but it was a speech which appealed to all the prejudices of the upper classes—of the landed classes—against the trade and manufactures of this country, and it was received with a degree of satisfaction which he (Mr. Villiers) had never witnessed in the House before. He was of opinion that the striking effect of that speech gave a decided character to the question now before the House, and he must almost think that the division about to take place would rather mark the difference between the views of those who agreed with the hon. Member for Knaresborough, and those who advocated opposite doctrines than the difference which existed on the question immediately before the House. If that speech had been received in silence, or if there had been any indication of dissent or disapprobation of the principles which the hon. Member proclaimed, it might have passed without notice; but he defied any one who witnessed the manner in which that speech was received, not to identify every Member who cheered and encouraged it, with the sentiments it contained. Therefore, he could not but think those who might constitute the majority against his motion, and vote with the hon. Member for Knaresborough, would strictly identify themselves with the sentiments and views of that Member. He was not able to judge of the correctness of all that Member's statements, but he could of some of them. He must say most decidedly and unequivocally, that at least two of those statements were wholly unfounded in fact. One of these was, he (Mr. Villiers) had taken the words down, and the hon. Member must either acknowledge them to be erroneous, or explain them away—that every petition presented to that House against the Corn-law had been paid for. [*" No, no."*] The hon. Gentleman might deny it, but he had taken the hon. Member's words down. The hon. Member for Knaresborough said, that all petitions presented to that House against the Corn-laws had been procured by means of money. [*" No, no."*] He said distinctly that the petitions against the Corn-laws had been paid for. These were the words uttered by him. [Mr. *Ferrand* intimated dissent.] The hon. Member denied that they were. [An hon. *Member*: " Some of the petitions."] The hon. Member did not say " some:" he said all of the petitions. However, the hon. Member disclaimed that statement. Another statement was, that the working classes were not against the Corn-laws. He knew for a fact that many of the working classes were as strongly opposed to them as the sternest enemy could be. The hon. Gentleman made the statement—he was not warranted in doing so. He had not been mooting this question for some years, without knowing what the feelings and opinions of the people were. He could certainly answer for his own constituents, and he knew that a large proportion of the working classes felt as intensely on this subject of the Corn-laws, as the sincerest opponent could do. It was a foul calumny upon them to say, that they were not opposed to the Corn-laws. He could only judge of the hon. Member's other statements by those which came within his own knowledge, and they were certainly not founded in fact. With respect to the charges made specifically and unequivocally against the manufacturers of this country—of plunder, robbery, and fraud—he presumed the hon. Member was prepared to prove them. He presumed he was in a situation to prove fraud and robbery against the manufacturers of England. [*" No, no."*] He understood the hon. Member limited his charges to the manufacturers who had subscribed to the association which he had styled the Anti-Corn-law League. He thought it must be obvious to the House and to the country, that such charges could not stop there. There was a distinct imputation, a direct and unqualified charge, by a Member of the House of Commons against certain persons engaged in the manufactures of this country, every one of whose names could be stated, whose circumstances could be ascertained, and the case against them investigated. The hon. Member had made those charges against the manufacturers, and they had been received with acclamation. He could hardly name the Member on the other side who did cheer them. He trusted, in justice to those manufacturers, that the Members who cheered the charges would insist on having them established. Notwithstanding what the hon. Member had said with respect to the motives of those who brought forward and supported this motion, he (Mr. Villiers) felt that he was justified in bringing it forward by the acknowledgment on all hands of the evils which the present law produced, and the sense which the people entertained of those evils. He was justified further by the concession made to this feeling by the Government itself. He received the concession of the Government as an encouragement to those who advocated a total repeal of the law. He accepted it as a sign that the people had established their case against the law, a sign that if they continued to agitate they would eventually succeed in obtaining what they had a right to ask. That alone would be a justification of his motion, and of the length to which this debate had been carried. He was further justified by the manner in which his motion had been met. In answer to the charges against the law, had a single new argument been uttered? [*" Oh, oh!"*] He should like to hear the original thought, that had been put forth in defence of the Corn-law. What had they had but the old stale argument that less was better than more. That was what hon. Gentlemen relied on most. They had had several candid and benevolent admissions from hon. Gentlemen opposite as to their readiness to abandon the law. One hon. Gentleman said, if he could be convinced that the working classes would be benefited by the change—that was to say, by abundance of food, he would consent to repeal the law. If the hon. Member for the West Riding of Yorkshire could be satisfied, that cheap food, or, in other words, plenty of food, would be good for the people, he would vote for repeal, and this was uttered gravely. Another favourite argument was, that we must guard against dependence on foreign countries. Why, they had heard this fifty times, and he believed there was hardly a charity boy in the country who would venture to employ it as against the benefit of abundance which would arise from regular commerce. But it was thought by some, who agreed with him in general principles—that vested interests were in question, and that his motion showed a disregard of such interests. He was not so ignorant or so dishonest as not to well consider the regard due to vested interests, or to show a disregard of the rights of property. But he wanted to know where this ground for upholding the Corn-law on the ground of vested interests was to end? When they had once begun to change, every argument from that source against total repeal was just as applicable to the Government modification. Exactly in proportion as a fixed duty, or the present Government plan did any good by cheapening food, in just the same proportion would it tend to withdraw protection, and throw poor land out of cultivation. If bad land is kept in cultivation by the present law, and that soils are of different fertility, it is clear that a very small change may have the effect of throwing the bad land out of cultivation, which is the worst thing apprehended by individual proprietors from the total repeal. But there were Gentlemen on his side of the House, who spoke with virtuous indignation of his motion for total repeal, and talked in a fine Conservative strain about the vastness of the capital embarked, and the great social interests that depended upon property in land, and of the tenderness required in dealing with such property, and then talked of an 8*s*. fixed duty, or a duty that should be more moderate than that which they would support. Why would that have no effect in disturbing capital, and the interest in agriculture, created under the law? Why, what good would it do, if it did no cheapen food by increasing the quantity and is it not that the mode by which it was expected that agricultural capital would be effected? On what land has the largest amount of capital been invested in proportion to the return? Why, the last cultivated or the worst land to be sure; and what capital then would be the first to be effected by a moderate fixed duty, but this very capital which had been invested with most risk. What consolation is it to the man whose land has sunk in value, owing to a low fixed duty; but his neighbour who had a better soil is not affected by the operation of that duty. But if there was a total repeal, the owners of bad land would soon feel the effects of the stimulus that would be given to commerce and manufacture. He agreed with the noble Duke who had left the Cabinet, and had just declared, that either the landed interest had a right to protection, or the people had a right to a total repeal. If the land was to be protected, he said, do not alter the law; if the land is not to be protected, do not attempt it, and do not let there be more agitation on the subject, and repeal the law. That was a manly and straightforward statement, and however much he differed with the noble Duke, he admired the consistency which seemed to prompt him in his course on this question. He could understand those who took up one position or the other. He agreed with the noble Duke that there was no resting place between protection and repeal. Some of the Gentlemen who had argued on this side he did not understand; they denounced the law in the strongest terms, did all they could to excite the people against the law, persuaded them that it was unjust and injurious; yet when a proposition is made to abolish a law so described, they stop short and discover that it is unjust to repeal such a law. He was sorry to hear his noble Friend last night (Lord J. Russell) say, that he could not vote with him, he could only explain his difficulty by supposing, that having undertaken to arbitrate between the parties in conflict, and having offered a compromise of less than the people had a right to demand, did not yet despair of carrying his object. He believed, however, that his noble Friend would, before another year, find himself completely mistaken. He would find the same unreasonableness on the part of those who benefited by the Corn-laws, which opposed equally its repeal and every substantial modification of it; and he would, ere long, see the justice of the people's claim, and the reasonableness of acceding to it. He must say, in vindication of his motion, that he thought it was not an unreasonable one. The argument which had been brought forward with regard to vested interests, was one which might have been urged upon other occasions as well as now; there were many measures to which he might refer, to which the same argument, if it ought to prevail at all, would equally apply. He might mention the case of the throwing open of the trade between this country and Ireland. There was not an argument which had been adduced upon this question which would not have applied to that proposition, and all such arguments was used at the time, have been since found to be fallacious; the measure having been attended with unqualified advantage to both countries. There was another measure which the right hon. Baronet had received much blame for passing—he meant the restoration of the currency to its proper basis. If ever there was a measure which required much time for it to be brought into operation it was that. [An hon. *Member*. It was gradual]. The Bank Restriction Act, no doubt, was passed but for a year at first, but it was re-enacted so often, that it was looked upon eventually as a permanent act, and he should like to know whether, in repealing that act, many vested interests were not disturbed, and whether existing contracts were regarded? [Sir *Robert Peel:* That was not a sudden measure.] At all events, the public were very little prepared for it when it was passed, and the currency was very much depreciated at the time. At that time existing interests were not regarded—the relative engagements of debtor and creditor were not protected. Whence this tenderness then for interests so much more questionable. The Reform Bill might have been resisted on the same ground. He said that the Corn-law was a bad law, and he did not deny that interests had grown up under it; but interests had grown up under the old system of representation. They had heard of boroughs being the subjects of settlement, and yet the feelings of the owners of these boroughs, or of the proprietors of these interests had never been heeded for one moment. He would take another case. He asked what regard had been shown to the vested interests which had accrued under the old Poor-law, when the Poor-law Amendment Act had been passed. What was the answer which was made to the argument raised when those interests were spoken of, and some consideration was claimed, and expectations raised, under the old law. It was said—"They are more injurious than beneficial to the poor, and it will be beneficial to them to abolish them." The discussion of that law did not last three months, and he ventured to say that law had made greater change in the vested interests of the poor, however much for their benefit, than any other which had ever been passed. These, then, were cases of vested interests, and he urged them now in defence of the motion which he proposed, and which was said to be unreasonable. He was only sorry for his motion on one ground, which was, that there would be a very large majority against it. He was sorry for it, because there could not be a doubt that all those interested in commerce—in the manufactures of this country—that the great mass of the people did most earnestly desire this law to be repealed; and, because the impression which would be left on every man's mind was, that what would promote all the great interests of the country was opposed by the House of Commons. He would only, in conclusion, give his own interpretation to the motion which he had laid before the House. The right hon. Baronet seemed to desire to fix upon him the opinion that nothing but instantaneous repeal would satisfy him. He did not deny that he apprehended nothing but good from their instant repeal; but by his motion, he meant chiefly to convey that the time was now fully arrived, when Corn-laws should no longer exist in this country; and he now invited the House to join him in that declaration. What he proposed was, a resolution, on which if carried, a bill might be founded, in which any provision might be introduced to prevent any immediate mischief or injustice. But what he wanted to pledge the House to, was to abolish the duties that obstruct the trade in food.

The House divided, on the question that all duties payable on the importation of corn, grain, meat, or flour, do now cease and determine.—Ayes 90, Noes 393; Majority 303.

List of the AYES.

Aglionby, H. A.
Ainsworth, P.
Aldam, W.
Bannerman, A.
Berkeley, hon. Capt.
Berkeley, hon. H. F.
Blake, M.
Blake, Sir V.
Blewitt, R. J.
Bowring, Dr.
Bridgeman, H.
Brotherton, J.
Bryan, G.
Busfeild, W.
Byng, rt. hon. G. S.
Collins, W.
Crawford, W. S.
Currie, R.
Dennistoun, J.
Duncan, Visct.

Duncan, G.
Duncombe, T.
Dundas, A. D.
Easthope, Sir J.
Ellis, W.
Elphinstone, H.
Ewart, W.
Ferguson, Col.
Fielden, J.
Fitzroy, Lord C.
Gibson, T. M.
Hall, Sir B.
Harford, S.
Harris, J. Q.
Hastie, A.
Hawes, B.
Hay, Sir A. L.
Heron, Sir R.
Hindley, C.
Horsman, E.
Humphery, Ald.
Johnson, Gen.
Johnston, A.
Langton, W. G.
Larpent, Sir G. de H.
Leader, J. T.
Marjoribanks, S.
Marshall, W.
Marsland, H.
Martin, J.
Morison, W.
Muntz, G. F.
Murphy, F. S.
Napier, Sir C.
O'Connell, D.
O'Connell, M. J.
Ord, W.
Oswald, J.
Parker, J.
Philips, G. R.
Philips, M.
Phillpotts, J.
Plumridge, Capt.
Protheroe, E.
Ricardo, J. L.
Rundle, J.
Scholefield, J.
Smith, B.
Somers, J. P.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Stewart, P. M.
Stuart, Lord J.
Stuart, W. V.
Strickland, Sir G.
Strutt, E.
Tancred, H. W.
Thornely, T.
Villiers, F.
Wakley, T.
Walker, R.
Wallace, R.
Ward, H. G.
Wawn, J. T.
Wilde, Sir T.
Williams, W.
Wilson, M.
Wood, B.
Wood, G. W.
Wood, Sir M.
Yorke, H. R.

TELLERS.
Cobden, R.
Villiers, hon. C. P.

List of the NOES.

Acheson, Visct.
Acland, Sir T. D.
Acland, T. D.
Ackers, J.
Acton, Col.
Adare, Visct.
Adderley, C. B.
Alexander, N.
Allix, J. P.
Antrobus, E.
Archdall, M.
Arkwright, G.
Ashley, Lord
Astell, W.
Attwood, J.
Bagge, W.
Bagot, hon. W.
Bailey, J.
Bailey, J., jun.
Baillie, Col.
Baillie, H. J.
Baldwin, C. B.
Balfour, J. M.
Bankes, G.
Baring, hon. W. B.
Baring, rt. hon. F. T.
Barneby, J.
Barrington, Visct.
Baskerville, T. B. M.
Bateson, Sir R.
Beckett, W.
Bell, M.
Benett, J.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Beresford, Capt.
Beresford, Major
Berkeley, hon. G. F.
Bernard, Visct.
Blackburne, J. I.
Blackstone, W. S.
Blake, M. J.
Blakemore, R.
Bodkin, W. H.
Bodkin, J. J.
Boldero, H. G.
Borthwick, P.
Botfield, B.
Bowes, J.
Bradshaw, J.
Bramston, T. W.
Broadley, H.
Broadwood, H.
Brodie, W. B.
Browne, hon. W.
Brownrigg, J. S.
Bruce, Lord E.
Bruce, C. L. C.
Bruen, Col.
Buck, L. W.
Buckley, E.
Buller, C.
Buller, Sir J. Y.
Bunbury, T.
Burrell, Sir C. M.
Burroughes, H. N.
Campbell, Sir H.
Campbell, A.
Carnegie, hon. Capt.
Cayley, E. S.
Chapman, A.
Chapman, B.
Charteris, hon. F.
Chelsea, Visct.
Chetwode, Sir J.
Childers, J. W.
Cholmondeley, hn. H.
Christmas, W.
Christopher, R. A.
Chute, W. L. W.
Clayton, Sir W. R.
Clayton, R. R.
Clerk, Sir G.
Clive, hon. R. H.
Cochrane, A.
Cockburn, rt. hn. Sir G.
Codrington, C. W.
Colborne, hn. W. N. R.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Cole, hon. A. H.
Collett, W. R.
Colville, C. R.
Compton, H. C.
Coote, Sir C. H.
Copeland, Ald.
Corry, rt. hon. H.
Courtenay, Visct.
Cowper, hon. W. F.
Cresswell, B.
Cripps, W.
Crosse, T. B.
Curteis, H. B.
Damer, hon. Col.
Darby, G.
Dawnay, hon. W. H.
Denison, E. B.
Dick, Q.
Dickinson, F. H.
D'Israeli, B.
Dodd, G.
Douglas, Sir H.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Douglas, J. D. S.
Douro, Marq. of
Dowdeswell, W.
Drummond, H. H.
Duff, J.
Duffield, T.
Duke, Sir J.
Duncombe, hon. A.
Duncombe, hon. O.
Du Pre, C. G.
East, J. B.
Eaton, R. J.
Ebrington, Visct.
Egerton, W. T.
Egerton, Sir P.
Eliot, Lord
Emlyn, Visct.
Escott, B.
Esmonde, Sir T.
Estcourt, T. G. B.
Evans, W.
Farnham, E. B.
Fellowes, E.
Ferguson, Sir R. A.
Feilden, W.
Ferrand, W. B.
Filmer, Sir E.
Fitzalan, Lord
Fitzroy, Capt.
Fleming, J. W.
Follett, Sir W. W.
Ffolliott, J.
Forbes, W.
Forester, hn. G. C. W.
French, F.
Fuller, A. E.
Gaskell, J. Milnes
Gill, T.
Gladstone, rt. hn. W. E.
Godson, R.
Gordon, hon. Capt.
Gordon, Lord F.
Gore, M.
Gore, W. O.
Gore, W. R. O.
Goring, C.
Goulburn, rt. hon..
Graham, rt. hn. Sir J.
Granby, Marq. of
Grant, Sir A. C.
Greenall, P.
Greenaway, C.
Gregory, W. H.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Grimsditch, T.
Grimston, Visct.
Grogan, E.
Hale, R. B.
Halford, H.
Hamilton, C. J. B.
Hamilton, W. J.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Hanmer, Sir J.
Harcourt, G. G.
Hardinge, rt. hn. Sir H.
Hardy, J.
Hatton, Capt. V.
Hawkes, T.
Hayes, Sir E.
Heathcote, G. J.
Heathcote, Sir W.
Heneage, G. H. W.
Heneage, E.
Henley, J. W.
Hepburn, Sir T. B.
Herbert, hon. S.
Hill, Sir R.
Hinde, J. H.
Hodgson, F.

Hodgson, R.
Hogg, J. W.
Holmes, hon. W. A'C.
Houldsworth, T.
Hope, hon. C.
Hope, A.
Hope, G. W.
Hornby, J.
Howard, hn. C. W. G.
Howard, Lord
Howard, hn. E. G. G.
Howard, hon. H.
Howard, Sir R.
Hughes, W. B.
Ingestrie, Visct.
Inglis, Sir R. H.
Irton, S.
Jackson, J. D.
James, Sir W. C.
Jermyn, Earl
Johnson, W. G.
Johnstone, Sir J.
Johnstone, H.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Jones, Capt.
Kelburne, Visct.
Kemble, H.
Kirk, P.
Knatchbull, rt. hon. Sir E.
Knight, H. G.
Knight, F. W.
Knightley, Sir C.
Labouchere, rt. hn. H.
Langston, J. H.
Law, hon. C. E.
Lawson, A.
Legh, G. C.
Leicester, Earl of
Lemon, Sir C.
Lennox, Lord A.
Liddell, hon. H. T.
Lincoln, Earl of
Lindsay, H. H.
Litton, E.
Lockhart, W.
Long, W.
Lowther, J. H.
Lowther, hon. Col.
Lyall, G.
Lygon, hon. Gen.
Mackenzie, T.
Mackenzie, W. F.
Mackinnon, W. A.
Maclean, D.
MacGeachy, F. A.
Mahon, Visct.
Mainwaring, T.
Manners, Lord C. S.
Manners, Lord J.
March, Earl of
Marsham, Visct.
Martin, C. W.
Martyn, C. C.
Marton, G.
Master, T. W. C.
Masterman, J.
Maunsell, T. P.
Meynell, Capt.
Miles, P. W. S.
Miles, W.
Milnes, R. M.
Mitcalfe, H.
Mitchell, T. A.
Mordaunt, Sir J.
Morgan, O.
Mostyn, hon. E. M. L.
Mundy, E. M.
Murray, C. R. S.
Neeld, J.
Neeld, J.
Neville, R.
Newry, Visct.
Nicholl, rt. hon. J.
Norreys, Lord
Northland, Visct.
O'Brien, A. S.
O'Brien, W. S.
O'Conor, Don
Ogle, S. C. H.
Ossulston, Lord
Owen, Sir J.
Packe, C. W.
Paget, Lord W.
Pakington, J. S.
Palmer, R.
Palmer, G.
Palmerston, Visct.
Patten, J. W.
Peel, rt. hn. Sir R.
Peel, J.
Pemberton, T.
Pendarves, E. W. W.
Plumptre, J. P.
Polhill, F.
Pollock, Sir F.
Powell, Col.
Power, J.
Praed, W. T.
Price, R.
Pringle, A.
Pusey, P.
Rae, rt. hn. Sir W.
Rashleigh, W.
Reade, W. M.
Redington, T. N.
Reid, Sir J. R.
Repton, G. W. J.
Rice, E. R.
Richards, R.
Rolleston, Col.
Rose, rt. hon. Sir G.
Round, C. G.
Round, J.
Rous, hon. Capt.
Rushbrooke, Col.
Russell, Lord J.
Russell, C.
Russell, J. D. W.
Ryder, hon. G. D.
Sanderson, R.
Sandon, Visct.
Scarlett, hon. R. C.
Scott, hon. F.
Seymour, Sir H. B.
Sheppard, T.
Shirley, E. J.
Shirley, E. P.
Sibthorp, Col.
Smith, A.
Smith, J. A.
Smyth, Sir H.
Smythe, hon. G.
Smollett, A.
Somerset, Lord G.
Somerton, Visct.
Sotheron, T. H. S.
Stanley, Lord
Stanley, E.
Stanley, hon. W. O.
Stanton, W. H.
Staunton, Sir G. T.
Stewart, J.
Stuart, H.
Sturt, H. C.
Sutton, hon. H. M.
Taylor, T. E.
Taylor, J. A.
Tennent, J. E.
Thesiger, F.
Thompson, Ald.
Thornhill, G.
Tollemache, hn. F. J.
Tollemache, J.
Tomline, G.
Towneley, J.
Traill, G.
Trevor, hon. G. R.
Trollope, Sir J.
Trotter, J.
Tuite, H. M.
Turner, E.
Turnor, C.
Tyrell, Sir J. T.
Vane, Lord H.
Vere, Sir C. B.
Verner, Col.
Vernon, G. H.
Villiers, Visct.
Vivian, J. E.
Vyvyan, Sir R. R.
Waddington, H. S.
Walsh, Sir J. B.
Wason, R.
Watson, W. H.
Welby, G. E.
Westenra, hon. H. R.
Whitmore, T. C.
Wilbraham, hn. R. B.
Wilmot, Sir J. E.
Wilshere, W.
Winnington, Sir T. E.
Wodehouse, E.
Wood, C.
Wood, Col. T.
Worsley, Lord
Wortley, hon. J. S.
Wrightson, W. B.
Wyndham, Col.
Wyndham, W.
Wynn, rt. hn. C.W.W.
Yorke, hon. E. T.
Young, J.
Young, Sir W.

TELLERS.

Fremantle, Sir T.
Baring, H.

Not Official.

Paired off.

NOES.	AYES.
Ashley, hon. H.	Westenra, hon. J.
Brooke, Sir A.	Butler, hon. Col.
Burdett, Sir F.	Sombre, D.
Castlereagh, Lord	Fleetwood, Sir H.
Clements, Col.	Clements, Lord
Conolly, Col.	Heathcoat, J.
Dugdale, W. S.	O'Ferrall, R. M.
Eastnor, Visct.	Ellice, E.
Forman, T. S.	Vivian, Major
Hamilton, J. H.	Browne, D.
Henniker, Lord	Seymour, Lord
Irving, J.	White, L.
Jocelyn, Lord	White, Col.
Kerr, D.	Listowel, Lord
Lopes, Sir R.	O'Connell, M.
Pennant, Hon. G. D.	Leveson, Lord
Planta, W. H. J.	Pigot, D. R.
Vesey, hon. T.	Shelburne, Lord

Absent.

MINISTERIALISTS.

A'Court, Capt. E. H.
Alford, Lord
Arbuthnott, hn. Gen.
Attwood, M.
Baird, W.
Cartwright, W. R.
Egerton, Lord F.
Hillsborough, Lord

Hotham, Lord
Jones, J.
Kerrison, Sir E.
Morgan, C.
Pigot, Sir R.
Pollington, Visct.
Ramsay, W. R.
Shaw, J.
Trench, Sir F.
Williams, J. P.
Wood, Col.
Wynn, Sir W. W.

OPPOSITIONISTS.

Anson, hon. G.
Archbold, H.
Armstrong, Sir A.
Barclay, D.
Barnard, E. G.
Bell, J.
Bellew, R. M.
Berkeley, hon. C.
Bernal, R.
Brocklehurst, J.
Bulkeley, Sir R. W.
Buller, E.
Byng, G.
Callaghan, D.
Carew, hon. R. S.
Cave, R. O.
Cavendish, hon. G.
Cavendish, hon. C.
Chalmers, P.
Clay, Sir W.
Clive, E. B.
Craig, W, G.
Dalmeny, Lord
Dalrymple, J.
Dashwood, G.
Dawson, hon. V.
D'Eyncourt, C. T.
Denison, W. J.
Denison, J. E.
Divett, E.
Drax, W. E.
Dundas, D.
Dundas, F.
Dundas, hon. J.
Ellice, rt. hon. E.
Etwall, R.
Fitzwilliam, hn. G. W.
Forster, M.
Fox, Col.
Gore, hon. Capt.
Granger, T. C.
Grattan, H.
Grosvenor, Lord H.
Guest, Sir J. J.
Hayter, W. G.
Hill, Lord M.
Hobhouse, Sir J. C.
Holdsworth, J.
Hollond, R.
Hoskins, K.
Howard, P. H.
Howard, hon. J.
Howick, Lord
Hutt, W.
James, W.
Jardine, W.
Jervis, J.
Lambton, H.
Layard, Capt.
Loch, J.
Macaulay, T. B.
Macnamara, Major
M'Taggart, Sir J.
Maher, V.
Mangles, R. D.
Martin, J. B.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Morris, D.
Morrison, J.
Murray, A.
Norreys, Sir J. D.
O'Brien, J.
O'Brien, C.
O'Connell, J.
Paget, Lord A.
Paget, Col. J.
Pechell, Capt.
Philipps, Sir R. B.
Pinney, W.
Ponsonby, hon. J.
Ponsonby, hon. C.
Powell, C.
Pulsford, N.
Ramsbottom, J.
Rawdon, Col.
Rennie, G.
Roche, Sir D.
Roche, E. B.
Roebuck, J. A.
Rumbold, C. E.
Russell, Lord E.
Rutherford, A.
Scott, R.
Scrope, G. P.
Seale, Sir J.
Shiel, R. L.
Smith, R. V.
Somerville, Sir W.
Stock, Serj.
Talbot, C. R. M.
Trowbridge, Sir T.
Tufnell, H.
Vivian, J. H.
Vivian, Capt.
Wall, C. B.
Wemyss, J.
White, S.
Wigney, J. N.

Summary.

Noes, including Tellers	395
Ayes, including Tellers	92
Paired	36

ABSENT.

Conservatives (Ministerialists) . .	20
Oppositionists	108
Speaker and Chairman of Committee .	2

SEATS VACANT, DOUBLE RETURNS, ETC.

Cardigan, Meath, Shropshire, Southampton, Thetford	5
	658

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, February 25, 1842.

MINUTES.] BILL. *Public.*—1ª· Duchy of Cornwall. 3ª· Mitford's Divorce.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By a noble Lord from Youghall, against the Corn Importation Plan.—By Lord Brougham from Haughton-le-Spring, for Total Repeal of the Corn-laws.—By Lord Stafford, from Presbyterians of Londonderry; by Lord Brougham from a Congregation in Belfast, and Elders of a Presbyterian Congregation (Dublin), and other places, for Rendering Valid Marriages of Dissenters.

DISSENTERS' MARRIAGES. (IRELAND).] The *Lord Chancellor* having presented a petition praying for an alteration of the law relating to the marriages of Presbyterians with Episcopalians, begged leave to state, in consequence of what had passed last night, that he had received a private intimation that leave had been given in the other House of Parliament to bring in a bill upon the subject of these marriages. He had made inquiries as to the state of that bill, and he learned that their Lordships might expect to see the bill in that House in the course of next week. He had, undoubtedly, supposed that the bill would have been returned to him before it was proposed to be introduced. He might add, that upon inquiries he found that the bill was now in the same state in which it had been when it passed from his hands.

The Marquess of *Lansdowne* expressed his regret that the bill had not been introduced first in their Lordships' House, because he thought that from the state of the business of the House of Commons, and from the declaration of the right hon. Baronet, the leader of that House, of his intention to proceed to the close of the matter which had been already for some time under discussion, it was extremely unlikely that their Lordships would have the bill before them at a period so early as had been anticipated by the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack.

Lord *Campbell* begged to inquire whether the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack would have any objection to state to the House whether the bill which had been prepared was a declaratory or an enacting bill? He too could not help declaring his deep regret at the course which had been taken, and that the bill had not originated in that House, where so much more time might have been devoted to it than it could at present receive in the House of Commons, and where it might immediately receive the aid of the deep learning and acquirements of the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack, and of other noble and learned Lords.

The *Lord Chancellor*, before he answered the question put by his noble and learned Friend, said, he must observe that the noble Marquess had not correctly stated what had fallen from the authority in the other House whom he quoted. What that right hon. Gentleman had said was, that there would not be time for the consideration of any other important question until that before the Commons was disposed of, with the exception of this very Bill relating to the mixed Marriages of Dissenters, so that for that measure time would be found, notwithstanding the pressure of the great question already before the House. With respect to the time at which the bill might be sent up from the Commons, he did not see any reason for thinking that it would be more distant than what he had already stated, namely, the end of next week, for he was not aware that there was any difference of opinion on it, which would be at all likely to retard its progress beyond that time. Without intending to say anything which could bring on a premature discussion of the measure, he would say, in answer to the question of his noble and learned Friend (Lord Campbell) that it would be "declaratory." It corresponded in every particular with the bill which he had prepared and sent to the law officers of the Crown, and when it came up from the other House he should, he hoped, be able to justify the particular form in which it had been prepared.

Lord *Brougham* said, that the making of it declaratory would no doubt cure one part of the evil complained of, but—

The *Lord Chancellor* was anxious not to be misunderstood as to the nature of the bill, which would be "enacting." If he had stated it otherwise, it was a mistake of the moment.

Lord *Brougham* had taken the word used by his noble and learned Friend, but take the bill to be "enacting," what, he would ask, was to become of those marriages of Quakers and others in our colonies, which stood on precisely the same grounds as that case on which the unfortunate decision of the Irish judges had recently been made?

The *Lord Chancellor* said, that his noble and learned Friend would find clauses in the bill which would apply to those points to which he had alluded; but if he should not think them sufficient he could propose to amend. It was not, let him add, the object of the bill to affect any cases but those to which it professed to apply.

Lord *Brougham:* But then, if it apply only to the removal of one evil, it would tend to throw doubts on other cases, which should by all possible means be avoided.

The *Lord Chancellor* said, he was unfortunate in not making himself clearly understood by some of their Lordships. All noble Lords whom he had heard say anything on the subject were agreed that some measure should be introduced to render valid all those marriages which had taken place between Dissenters and members of the Church of England, and which had been declared invalid by the recent decision of the judges. It was also considered desirable that some measure should be introduced for the purpose of settling the general question as to those marriages in future; but it was understood, at least so he understood it, that in the meantime a short bill should be introduced which would remove the immediate evil, but was not, and could not, be meant to affect any measure which might be considered necessary on the whole question of Dissenters' marriages in Ireland in future.

Lord *Campbell* thought, that there was no doubt whatever of the urgency of the case, but the law must also be considered, and he felt that it was of the last importance that a proper decision should be arrived at, whether this bill should be a declaratory or an enacting bill. He begged to suggest to the consideration of the noble and learned Lord the statute 21 and 22 Geo. 3rd, which related to the validity of marriages of Presbyterians. If the marriages between Presbyterians and Episcopalians were invalid, so also the intermarriages of Presbyterians before that act must have been also invalid. The Irish legislature, however, in passing that act had not adopted the course which was now proposed, in enacting that these marriages should be valid; but they had declared that they were valid. It was of the greatest importance that this point should be considered, for he could not help thinking that it was better to follow that which was a direct precedent than to take a new course of proceeding.

The *Lord Chancellor* could not enter into this question without entering into the whole consideration of the law affecting these marriages; he would not therefore at the present time make any inquiry into the subject, the bill being before the other House of Parliament; but when it should come before their Lordships, he would state the grounds on which he proposed that it should be an enacting bill. The distinction between the act alluded to by his noble and learned Friend and the bill now before Parliament was this: that act had for its object the regulation of both past and future marriages, while this bill was directed to the former object only. He should not, however, enter any further into the question, but should defer anything that he had to say to the period when the bill should be before the House.—Petition laid on the Table.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, February 25, 1842.

Minutes.] Bills. *Public.*—1°. Building Regulations (No. 2.); Borough Improvements (No. 2.); West-India Clergy, and Parish Property.

2°. Marriages (Ireland); Van Dieman's Land; Apprentices Regulation; Queen's Prison.

3°. and passed:—Duchy of Cornwall.

Private.—1°. Cheltenham Union Railway; Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway; Mitford's Divorce.

2°. Bradford Waterworks; Brandling Junction Railway; Kingsclere Enclosure.

Election Petition. Wareham Election.

Petitions Presented. By Sir A. Leith Hay, Lord Dalmeny, Captain Berkeley, Mr. P. M. Stewart, Sir G. Strickland, and a number of other Members, from Campsall, Glasgow, Thorne, Spitalfields, and several other places, for the Repeal of the Corn-laws.—By Lord Worsley, from the Grimsby Agricultural Association, against the Proposed Measure of the Corn-laws.—By Lord Grimston, from Hitchin, suggesting Alteration in the Scale of Duties.—By Mr. Arkwright, from Scarcliff and Bolsover, in favour of the Ministerial Measure.—By Lord Acheson, Mr. Sergeant Jackson, Captain Meynell, Mr. E. Tennent, and Lord Eliot, from Congregations of Presbyterians, (Ireland), for Legalizing certain Marriages by Dissenters.—By Lord Dalmeny, Dr. Bowring, Marquess of Granby, and Mr. Leader, from Places in the Metropolis, for the Redemption of Tolls on the Metropolitan Bridges.—By Mr. Colville, from Biggin, Elton, and Harlington, against the Renewal of the Poor-law.—By Mr. G. Ward, from the Kendal Union, for an Alteration of the Poor-law.

Dissenters' Marriages (Ireland.)] Lord *Eliot* moved the second reading of the Marriages (Ireland) Bill.

Mr. *O'Connell* wished the act had been a declaratory act, as it would have saved a great deal of trouble, and prevented many anomalies that would otherwise arise. Although eight out of ten of the judges had decided that the marriages in question were invalid, yet their decision was in the nature of an extra-judicial one, and many high authorities, among whom was Mr. Justice Perrin, entertained a different view of the law.

Mr. Sergeant *Jackson* suggested the difficulty of the House declaring the law to be the reverse of that which it was held to be by eight out of ten of the judges of the land.

The *Attorney-general* said, if the act were made declaratory, it would become prospective as well as retrospective; the former question was still under consideration.

Lord *Eliot* observed, that the subject of the law was under consideration with a view to a permanent and general enactment.

Bill read a second time.

Poor-law—Returning Officers.] Mr. *T. Duncombe* wished to put a question to the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department. He had that morning received a letter from the chairman of the board of guardians of the Preston Union, from which it appeared that last year, during the election of the guardians of the poor, great dissatisfaction existed in the town of Preston, on account of the clerk of the board of guardians having been appointed the returning officer. That Gentleman also stated in his letter, his belief that all clerks of boards of guardians who acted as returning officers had a direct pecuniary interest in exciting contests, and that their position as returning officers gave them facilities for bringing about the return of partial persons, and of their own friends. Now, he wished to know whether it was the intention of the Government to pursue at the ensuing election of boards of guardians, the same system that had been pursued in particular large towns, of appointing the clerks of the boards of guardians to be the returning officers.

Sir *J. Graham* said, he had already answered the question in substance, in consequence of a question that had been put to him by the hon. Member for Knaresborough. It was the intention of the Poor-law Commissioners generally to appoint the clerks of the boards of guardians to be returning officers at the approaching elections. He had, at the same time, stated the reasons that had influenced them in coming to this decision. They were, that the clerks of the boards of guardians were persons holding their appointments during pleasure; that they were in the possession of valuable appointments from which they were removeable for misconduct; and it had also been announced, that should any one of those returning officers, at the approaching election, be found to have been guilty of the least misconduct in the discharge of his duty, condign punishment would certainly follow. At the same time, he (Sir J. Graham) stated, that all arrangements made for the election in March had been made with a view to the clerk of the guardians being the returning officer, and that any change made now, would involve the whole election in inextricable confusion.

Subject at an end.

House in Committee on the Corn Importation Act,

CORN-LAWS — MINISTERIAL PLAN — MR. CHRISTOPHER'S AMENDMENT.] The *Chairman* again put the first resolution, that

> "Whenever the average price of wheat, made up and published in the manner required by law, shall be, for every quarter, under 51*s*., the duty shall be for every quarter 1*l*."

Mr. *Christopher* rose, pursuant to the notice which he had given, to move the substitution of the scale of duties which he held in his hand, and of submitting them for the adoption of the committee in preference to the scale that had been recommended by his right hon. Friend, the First Lord of the Treasury. In bringing the subject under the consideration of the committee, he should best consider his own inclination and their convenience, by restricting his observations entirely to the scale itself. For, considering that for nearly the whole of the last fourteen days, they had been debating on the subject of the Corn-laws—first, whether it was expedient that there should be a fixed duty on the importation of foreign corn, and secondly, whether it was expedient on the part of the House to sanction any duty whatever; and also considering that the country, on being appealed to by the late Administration, had distinctly recorded its vote in favour of agricultural protection, and that in that House, only early on that very morning, it had been decided by an overwhelming majority in the most unequivocal terms, that it was expedient that protection should be afforded to the agricultural interest;—considering these things, he held himself entitled to conclude, that the opinion of that House and of the country at large was in favour of protection, and he should, therefore, not offer any observation that could tend to open again the general debate, on the expediency or inexpediency of the existing Corn-laws. He would have infinitely preferred seeing the bill of the Government on the Table, and he would have preferred that that bill had obtained a second reading before he had brought on his motion, but as he was given to understand that by the forms of the House, he was precluded from offering any proposition at that stage which had for its object to increase the scale of duties beyond that proposed by the Government, he was compelled to adopt the present as the only occasion on which he could state his views. His right hon. Friend in his opening speech, introducing the measure of the Government, stated, and stated most truly, that it was a difficult matter to consider or to propose any scale of duties on the importation of corn without at the same time taking into consideration the question of averages. That part of the measure of the Government would not, in his (Mr. Christopher's) opinion, give the producer of corn in this country sufficient control either as to fluctuating sales or averages. Still he would endeavour to postpone any observations he might have to make on that part of the subject until the bill was in committee; and he should, therefore, strictly confine himself now to the subject of the scale of duties. In the first place, he was willing to admit that the scale proposed by his right hon. Friend was, in some respects, a considerable improvement on that under which the duties were now levied. Coupling the scale with the question of the mode of taking the averages, he must say, that he could not but look at it as a considerable improvement. But he thought he could show that if they were to judge at all from past experience, that scale would not afford sufficient protection to the producer of corn in this country,—not at that period when protection was not particularly required,—not at the period of an unusually abundant harvest,—but at the period of an average harvest, or a deficient harvest, when the producer, with all his energy, skill, and industry, was barely receiving a remunerating profit. He also agreed with his right hon. Friend in the opinion which he had expressed, as to the difficulty there was in attempting to say what, at all times, and all seasons, and under all circumstances, ought to be a sufficiently remunerating price to the producer of wheat. It was impossible to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion, without taking into consideration the relative value of other agricultural produce. But he thought he might safely say, that no one would accuse him of making an exaggerated statement; on the contrary, he was sure he would be considered by many well judging persons to be very moderate in his statement, when he said, that when the price of wheat was 56*s.*, that of barley ought to be 30*s.*, that of oats 23*s.*, and that of wool at least 30*s.* for every 28lb. It was a difficult matter to determine at all times, and under all circumstances, what the value was of agricultural produce on the continent. It was also difficult to form an opinion at all times, and under all circumstances, of what the price of freight, insurance, and other charges attendant upon bringing wheat into this country, ought to be. He had made it his business to gather information on the subject from private sources, but it was of so contradictory a nature that he would not more particularly refer to it. He would, however, say, that from all the information he had received he was fully convinced of this fact, that her Majesty's Government in legislating on this important question ought not to be guided in any degree by the information of Mr. Meek. That Gentleman stated, that the price at which wheat might be shipped from all quarters of Europe was 40*s.* 6*d.* per quarter. Now, that, in his opinion, was at least 10*s.* too high. If he could judge in any degree from the price at which foreign corn had been sold in bond during the last fourteen years, he must arrive at a very different conclusion from Mr. Meek; but he should be unwilling to ground his arguments entirely upon the price at which foreign corn had been sold in bond in the eastern ports of England. He, however, would repeat that which he had stated elsewhere, that he conceived it to be the duty, and also the interest of the British producer, to allow the consumer in this country to procure the chief necessary of life, at the lowest possible rate at which he himself could afford to grow it. He was convinced if it could be proved that in ordinary years, and under ordinary circumstances, foreign wheat could be brought into this country, exclusive of profit insurance and duty, at as low a price as 26*s.*, the *maximum* duty ought not to be less than 30*s.* If it could be brought at 34*s.*, which he believed it could be in ordinary years, the *maximum* duty ought not to be less than 25*s.* But from the information derived from Mr. Meek, it could not be placed free on board under 40*s.* 6*d.* Now, if he could concede that Mr. Meek was right and that he was wrong, then would he say, that the measure of her Majesty's Government ought to be sufficiently satisfactory to the agricultural interest, and that the *maximum* duty of 20*s.*, would afford to it a sufficient protection. He did not wish to rely exclusively on any information he had received regarding what the price of wheat in bond had been in this country during the last few years, but he wished to state, that he had received a communication from a very eminent merchant at Hull, who had been engaged in the corn trade for upwards of forty years, which he thought would be satisfactory to the hon. Member for Lambeth, and other hon. Members at that side of the House, so far at least as distinctly showing, that from the prices at which foreign corn was sold at Hull, there could be nothing prohibitory in the scale of duties proposed by her Majesty's Government. From the information forwarded to him by that gentleman, he found that in the year 1832 the lowest price of foreign wheat in bond sold at Hull was 32*s.* per quarter, and the highest in the same year 41*s.* 6*d.* In 1834, he sold as much as 1,589 quarters at 16*s.*, which was the lowest, the highest price in that year being 30*s.* In 1835, the price ranged from between 17*s.* to 20*s.* 6*d.*; in 1836, from 17*s.* up to as high as 42*s.*; in 1837, the lowest price was 27*s.* 6*d.*, and the highest 39*s.* He would proceed now to test the scale of the right hon. Baronet by another proof. He would suppose, for the purpose, that the right hon. Baronet's scale had been in operation during the last fourteen years, and if he could show under that supposition, that the producer of corn in this country could have been undersold in his own market, when the price ranged between 50*s.* and 56*s.* he thought he was entitled to ask the Government to reconsider their measure, and—the committee having already sanctioned the principle of protection—to ask for that protection when the price should vary between 50*s.* and 56*s.* The consequences to be dreaded, when the price was under 50*s.* were not from any unusual competition from abroad, but from an abundant harvest at home; and, judging from past experience, it would appear that a maximum duty of 20*s.* was sufficient protection when the price was below 50*s.*, but not when it was between 50*s.* and 56*s.* There was nothing more likely to discourage agriculture and the outlay of capital on land than for those engaged in it to find when expecting to receive a remunerating profit for their industry and labour, that they were undersold in the home market by the foreign competitor. He had stated that when the price was under 50*s.* the maximum duty of 20*s.* would be a sufficient protection, and to prove it he would refer to a return which had been presented to the House on the 30th of March, 1840, by the hon. Baronet who represented the western division of the county of Cornwall, showing the highest and lowest weekly averages in England compared with those of certain ports in Europe. He would take for example the lowest average of each successive year in England from 1829 to 1838, and set against it the lowest average in certain places on the continent. He would then add a certain sum for freight, and insurance and apply a maximum duty of 20*s.* when the price ranged under 50*s.* He would next apply the same test to those years in which the price ranged above 50*s.*; and so prove, when the price averaged from 50*s.* to 56*s*,, at least, that in almost every such instance the producer of corn in this country would have been undersold by foreigners in the home market. In four of those years, between 1829 and 1836, the average price in England was under 50*s.* as appeared from the following return, which also gave the lowest average prices at four European ports:

	England.		Dantsic.		Memel		Hamburgh.		Odessa.	
	s.	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*
1833	49	2	26	4	23	5	23	2	19	7
1834	40	6	23	2	23	5	23	2	21	10
1835	36	0	20	1	19	4	20	9	16	2
1836	36	0	21	10	18	1	21	1	16	2

He now proposed to add a sufficient sum for freight and all other charges excepting profit and duty. A question certainly arose as to what that sum ought to be; and if he chose to argue it, he could refer to extreme cases. He had been informed that foreign wheat had been brought into the port of Hull for 10*d.* a quarter, into Gainsborough for 1*s.* 8*d.*, and into Wakefield for 3*s.* He, therefore, to avoid dispute upon the subject, would allow 5*s.* a quarter on wheat imported from the Baltic, and 10*s.* from Odessa. Add this sum for freight, and insurance, and then add 20*s.*, the proposed duty, and they would find the following to be the prices of foreign corn imported into this country from the places specified, when corn in England was under 50*s.*:

	England.		Dantsic.		Memel.		Hamburgh.		Odessa.	
	s.	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*
1833	49	2	51	4	48	5	48	2	49	7
1834	40	6	48	2	48	5	48	2	51	10
1835	36	0	45	1	44	4	45	9	46	2
1836	36	0	46	10	43	1	46	1	46	2

This was in favour, so far as it went, of the proposal of her Majesty's Government but let him take the other six years, when the lowest price in this country ranged between 50*s.* and 56*s.*—50*s.* being the lowest price, under all circumstances, and in the opinion of persons well informed on the subject, at which the agriculturists could afford to grow it. The following table would show what was the price of foreign corn when in England the price ranged between 50*s.* and 56*s.*:

	England.		Dantsic.		Memel.		Hamburgh.		Odessa.	
	s.	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*
1829	55	4	30	8	23	3	31	7	0	0
1830	55	5	29	9	22	2	27	8	16	0
1831	59	2	40	2	31	4	34	9	19	10
1832	51	3	28	10	0	0	27	7	18	0
1837	51	0	23	2	20	5	24	2	17	11
1838	52	4	24	1	23	0	27	3	18	1

Adding the charge for freight, and the duty proposed by her Majesty's Government, to these prices, and they had the result as follows:

	England.		Dantsic.		Memel.		Hamburgh.		Odessa.	
	s.	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*
1829	55	4	52	8	45	3	53	7	0	0
1830	55	5	51	9	44	2	49	8	43	0
1831	59	2	58	2	49	4	52	9	42	10
1832	51	3	52	10	0	0	51	7	47	0
1837	51	0	47	2	44	5	48	2	46	11
1838	52	4	47	1	46	0	50	3	46	1

Now in legislating upon a matter of this great importance, and upon which there were so many conflicting opinions, he thought that the safest way to proceed would be not to legislate on any speculative representations which might have been derived either from persons engaged in the corn trade, or even from those gentlemen employed by the Government to ascertain the rate of continental prices. There was no doubt that Mr. Meek had conscientiously discharged his duty; but they should be very cautious in acting upon information so derived, lest, by so doing, they should give a blow to the agriculture of this country, which would have the effect of throwing out of cultivation a large portion of that poor description of soil upon which the greatest amount of capital and labour was expended—an expenditure let it be remarked, which was not to be recovered in the same manner as capital vested in manufactures. It was easy for those gentlemen who informed them that they owed no allegiance to the soil of England to pack up their mills and go to a foreign country: but capital vested in the soil could not be so withdrawn and vested elsewhere. The manufacturer, moreover, considered himself entitled to an enormous profit on his outlay of capital, while the agriculturist was contented with a very small amount of remuneration. Taking the whole of this part of the subject into consideration, he would entreat the committee to pause before they sanctioned a state of things which in his humble opinion must have the effect of throwing the poorer description of soil out of cultivation, and not only that, but possibly, by dealing a blow to the agricultural interest, inflict at the same time a serious injury also upon the manufactures of the country. He would now shortly test the scale of the right hon. Baronet in another way. He would refer to the consul's returns of continental prices during the six years from 1834 to 1839 inclusive. He took those years because they presented a pretty fair average as to seasons and prices, three of them being cheap years, one a year of moderate production, and the two others years of dearth. Taking the average prices at Riga, Konigsberg, Dantsic, and Odessa, and comparing them with the prices in England during the years he had mentioned, they would find the following results.

Year.	Average price at Riga.		Average price in England.	
	s.	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*
1834	24	1	46	2
1835	22	6	39	4
1836	24	0	48	6
1837	26	4	55	10
1838	36	10	64	7
1839	37	4	68	6

The average for those six years at Riga was 28*s.* 6*d.*, whilst in England it was 53*s.* 9*d.* Looking at all the places he had referred to, the average for the six years was as follows:—

Riga.	Konigsberg.	Dantsic.	Odessa.	England.
s. d.	*s. d.*	*s. d.*	*s. d.*	*s. d.*
28 6 ..	27 5 ..	30 6 ..	21 6 ..	53 9

Now, adding to these amounts the 5*s.* from the Baltic, and 10*s.* from Odessa for freight, and the 18*s.* for duty, which would be taken when corn was at a less price than 54*s.*, they would find that the prices of the different wheats when brought into this market would be:—

Riga Wheat.	Konigsberg Wheat.	Dantsic Wheat.	Odessa Wheat.
s. d.	*s. d.*	*s. d.*	*s. d.*
51 6 ..	50 5 ..	53 6 ..	49 6

Whilst the price of English wheat would be 53*s.* 9*d.* Thus it was clear that the effect of the scale proposed by the Government would be to render the farmer liable to be undersold in his own market—not in years of scarcity, but in years when there was an abundance, and when, in fact, the British agriculturists ought to be competing with each other rather than with the foreign producers. The right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government, in the course of the speech in which he had opened this question to the House, had said, that looking at all the circumstances, he thought the farmers ought to be satisfied with from 54*s.* to 58*s.* as a remunerating price. Now, he felt confident that if this scale were adopted, the British producers would rarely receive 54*s.* Giving them all the advantages derivable from the scale—giving them every advantage derivable from the revision of the list of towns in which the averages were taken—he felt sure that they would nevertheless rarely get 54*s.* under the new law. He did not think that the additions to the list of towns in which the averages were struck would make any material difference in the price. The alterations might make some slight difference in favour of the farmer, but, upon the whole, he did not think they could make a difference of above 2*s.* upon the price of the quarter of wheat. That he knew was the opinion of practical persons and of those who were engaged in the trade. Now, under such a state of things, he really could not but look to the probable operation of the Ministerial scale with considerable apprehension. It was all very well for hon. Gentlemen opposite to say that this was only a question of rent—

that it was merely a matter that affected the landed aristocracy; but that was not the case. If the great landed proprietors were the only persons likely to be affected, he was ready to say at once that if they supposed that by agreeing to this scale, and by surrendering some of the superfluities and luxuries they commanded, they would arrive at a permanent settlement of the question, in such a case he was prepared to say that they might adopt this scale. Nay, he would go further. He would say, that rather than allow the agitation of this corn question to be continued, the landed proprietors would agree to the proposition advocated by the noble Lord, the Member for London, of a fixed duty, if they could do so without sacrificing the interests of all classes who are dependent on agriculture. But, as he said before, it was not the great landed proprietors only who would suffer. Others would be injured who had no luxuries or superfluities to part with, but who rather moved in a circle of usefulness than of enjoyment. A class would be affected who formed one of the most useful parts of the population, who were a connecting link between the large landed proprietors and their poorer dependents, and when it was recollected that this class had entered into engagements upon the faith of the existing law, he was sure the House would feel how cautious they ought to be in making any alteration in its provisions by which they could be at all injuriously affected. He had the honour to represent a body of constituents who were solely dependent on the cultivation of the soil. One and all in that district looked with alarm to the operation of the projected scale. An hon. Member who had spoken the other night had asserted the rate of wages in some parts of England to be not more than 6*s*. or 7*s*. a week. If that calculation were correct, all he would say, was, that he greatly deplored the fact, and that he regretted temptations to crime should be put in the way of the labourer, by not giving him a remunerating price for his exertions. He thought that excellent association, the Royal Agricultural Society, should turn their attention to the subject, with a view of inducing all who employed agricultural labourers to give them fair remunerating wages for their labour. In Lincolnshire, however, he was glad to say, that wages were by no means so low as they were represented to be elsewhere. The rate in that county was from 13*s*. 6*d*. to 15*s*. a week, and it was his opinion, that when prices were fair, the labourers ought not to receive less—he was quite satisfied that his constituents did not desire to pay less. They wished to see their labourers well off, and they never begrudged them a fair rate of payment when they could afford it. They would much rather pay a high price for bread than have wages at that diminished rate to which he feared they would fall if the Government scale were to be adopted. He had said in the outset that he would strictly confine his observations to the consideration of the scale, and should refrain altogether from discussing the general merits of the law. He might be permitted, however, to say a few words regarding the proposed alterations in the duties on barley. The arguments which applied to some other sorts of grain did not, in his opinion, apply to that species of corn. Barley did not form an essential article of food, and, in addition to that circumstance, it ought to be especially borne in mind, that it already paid a very heavy tax in the shape of the malt tax. They would recollect, too, that any discouragement to the growth of barley might prove to be a discouragement to the rearing of sheep and cattle, for it was a well-known fact, that in those farms on which barley was cultivated to the greatest extent, the largest quantity of stock was reared. There was, too, with regard to that grain, much additional expense and trouble in cultivation; and considering that and other circumstences, he did hope that her Majesty's Ministers would, before it was too late, consider the inexpediency of any reduction in the scale of duties on the importation of foreign grain of that description. If they did reduce the protection at present existing, he greatly feared the interests of agriculturists would, with respect to that species of grain, be most injuriously affected. He had now concluded all he had to say with regard to this subject. No one, he was sure, would accuse him of wishing to secure an undue protection for the agriculturist, or with taking an exaggerated view of the protection to which they were entitled in consequence of the burdens which they bore. Neither could it be said that he exaggerated the evil effects which might follow a removal of that protection, or that he was giving an opposition to the Government scale, because he attached any undue importance to the law as it at present existed. On the contrary, the fact was, that during the interval between the last Session and the present, he had applied his mind to the subject, and, after mature consideration, had endeavoured to prepare his constituents for material alterations in the existing system. He knew that he had incurred much odium. He had been accused of concerting with the Government to overthrow the agricultural interest by altering the present law. He could, however, safely put it to the Government whether he had ever had any communication with them, either directly or indirectly, upon the subject. Having great confidence in her Majesty's Ministers—having especial confidence in the industry, the persevering zeal, and the great talent of his right hon. Friend the Vice-President of the Board of Trade—it was not without much hesitation that he ventured to propose a scale in any degree different from that he had submitted to the House. But it seemed to him most important that they should have an extra 5*s*. duty at the lower prices in the scale. But, however the House might decide the question, whether they concurred with him in opinion or not, he trusted they would discuss the matter dispassionately and fairly, and he could assure them that it should be his object to comply with the law, rather than throw the reins of Government into the hands of a party, whose policy was wholly subversive of the interests of agriculture. The hon. Gentleman concluded by moving, as an amendment, the first resolution of the following scale, namely, that when the average price of wheat was—

50*s*. and under 51*s*., the duty should be 25*s*.

The remainder of the hon. Gentleman's scale, which was not put, was as follows:—

51*s*.	and under	52*s*.	the duty should be	24*s*.
52*s*. ..	..	53*s*.	.. ..	23*s*.
53*s*. ..	..	54*s*.	.. ..	22*s*.
54*s*. ..	..	55*s*.	.. ..	21*s*.
55*s*. ..	..	56*s*.	.. ..	20*s*.
56*s*. ..	..	57*s*.	.. ..	19*s*.
57*s*. ..	..	58*s*.	.. ..	18*s*.
58*s*. ..	..	59*s*.	.. ..	17*s*.
59*s*. ..	..	60*s*.	.. ..	16*s*.
60*s*. ..	..	61*s*.	.. ..	14*s*.
61*s*. ..	..	62*s*.	.. ..	13*s*.
62*s*. ..	..	63*s*.	... ..	12*s*.
63*s*. ..	..	64*s*.	.. ..	11*s*.
64*s*. ..	..	65*s*.	.. ..	10*s*.
65*s*. ..	..	66*s*.	.. ..	9*s*.
66*s*. ..	..	67*s*.	.. ..	8*s*.
67*s*. ..	..	68*s*.	.. ..	7*s*.
68*s*. ..	..	69*s*.	.. ..	6*s*.
69*s*. ..	..	70*s*.	.. ..	5*s*.
70*s*. ..	..	71*s*.	.. ..	4*s*.
71*s*. ..	..	72*s*.	.. ..	3*s*.
72*s*. .	..	73*s*.	.. ..	2*s*.
73*s*. ..	..	..	.. ..	1*s*.

Mr. *F. T. Baring* said, he must confess that he felt no small degree of surprise that no hon. Gentleman on the Ministerial bench had risen to reply to the speech they had just heard. It seemed as if it were intended that there should be no debate on this proposition—a proposition which, in point of fact, whether they debated it or not, he contended, the House could not decide at all. With the hon. Gentleman who had last spoken, he objected very strongly to a 20*s*. duty, though probably their objections were taken on widely different grounds. It seemed to him, that this was a very convenient period for entering upon a part of the discussion that had not yet been touched. He thought this was a very proper time to call for some information as to the principle of the scale they were asked to adopt. But before he went into that part of the question, he must take leave to express his surprise as to the manner in which this proposition had been brought forward. The hon. Member for Lincolnshire had looked behind him in vain—not one of his agricultural friends appeared prepared to support him. If he had not interfered, perhaps not a single word would have been said by those who on the hustings had committed themselves, and so stoutly advocated the principle of "No surrender." No doubt, the hon. Member had brought forward his motion in the manner the hon. Member thought best calculated to advance it, but he must say, that he did not think the agricultural interest could be complimented on the discretion of their champion. The way to bring forward a motion with the greatest probable chance of success, was not to submit it in such a manner that it would be contrary to the rules of the House to take an opinion on it. They had heard of "sciomachy" on another occasion, but this was indeed a fight of shadows. His chief object, however, was to gather from the Government what were the principles on which they founded their scale. The House, he understood, had now decided on adopting the sliding system. They had rejected the fixed duty, and by rejecting the proposal of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, they had confirmed the principle of protection. But, although they had approved of its principle, they had as yet said very little in defence of the proposed sliding scale. He would not quarrel with them for that, because, perhaps, they would excuse themselves by saying, that they had not until that evening got into the details; but at any rate, they were among the details now, and therefore the present time was the proper time for a full and complete explanation. He felt satisfied, that when the Government looked at the facts, they would feel it to be their duty to give that explanation. What was the resolution before them? They were asked to decide that "whenever the average price of wheat, made up and published in the manner required by law, shall be for every quarter under 51*s*., the duty on the importation of foreign wheat shall be for every quarter 1*l*." "Made up and published in the manner required by law." Those words raised at once the whole question as to the mode of taking the averages. Their attention had hitherto been directed to a comparison of one system with another; but now they had at last come to the main part of the question. The hon. Member opposite had said, that considerable alterations would be made in the average prices by the mode of taking the averages. He need not go any further after the speech of the hon. Gentleman; he had the hon. Gentleman for a fair witness, although his interest might have made him an unwilling witness. The hon. Gentleman said 5*s*. was exaggerated, but that there might be a difference to the extent of 2*s*.; he admitted a difference of 2*s*., after having given great attention to the subject. He took that admission; he spoke entirely without the slightest intention to hint a doubt whether the right hon. Baronet opposite had really the intention which he stated to the House, not to make any alteration in the mode of taking the averages that would increase the amount of protection. He should be very sorry that any word should fall from him, imputing a concealment of intentions to the right hon. Baronet. He did the right hon. Baronet only justice in supposing that the right hon. Gentleman had a perfect conviction that what he had stated would occur. It was impossible to think otherwise, because, though hon. Gentlemen opposite might, if they pleased, carry the question by the point of the bayonet—though they might do that if they wished it—still it was not possible to suppose that they could think of carrying it by cheating the public. He thought, particularly after the statement of the hon. Gentleman, that the public had a right, and the House, before it passed this vote, had a right, to obtain from the right hon. Baronet that information and those papers which he was quite sure the right hon. Baronet and his colleagues had had before them in the Cabinet, when, after having maturely considered this subject, they announced an alteration in the mode of taking the averages, which, at the same time, the right hon. Baronet assured the House would have no effect on the result. He was quite sure that there must be some information on this head, and that the House ought to have it before them. It was clear, for instance, that London had a price which, without the slightest fraud, rose considerably above the general average of the country; that was the case with all large markets; but it was particularly so with London. The sales in London bore a certain relative proportion to the whole amount of the sales of corn. Now, the right hon. Gentleman altered the whole amount of the sales; he threw 150 new towns into the list of places for determining the averages. The House knew nothing of the quantity sold in those markets, but it was quite clear that any reduction of the proportion which London bore to all the other markets was in itself a disturbing cause, and must have some effect upon the averages. He took it for granted that the right hon. Gentleman had some information as to the sales which took place in the markets he threw in, and that he would give it to the committee. He was quite sure that the Cabinet, which had deliberately considered the whole subject, could not have been without information as to this point, and that the right hon. Baronet would see the propriety of imparting it to the committee. There was another matter with respect to which he thought some information was required. The right hon. Gentleman the Vice-President of the Board of Trade had introduced on an early day of the present Session a bill for regulating the trade of the British possessions; one of the right hon. Gentleman's resolutions proposed to lay a duty of 3*s*. a-quarter on corn imported into Canada. His noble Friend near him (Lord J. Russell), while approving of the bill in other respects, stated that he had a strong objection to this part of it; he entered a *caveat* as to assenting to the 3*s*. duty. A question was subsequently put to the right hon. Gentleman on this subject, and the answer, as far as he could understand it, was, that the proposed duty was now under the consideration of Government, and that they had not decided whether they would persist in it or abandon it, but that the measure would be laid on the Table of the House, to afford time for consideration. The House had a right to be informed of the decision to which Government had come. He recollected that when he had to bring forward the subject of the sugar duties he had, in the interval between making the proposition and printing it, made some little alteration in one part of the plan, in consequence of representations that had been made to him, in order to avoid raising a strong opposition. He remembered the bitter attack made upon him by the right hon. Gentleman in consequence of the alteration thus made. He remembered, that though the right hon. Gentleman admitted that his character precluded the supposition of unfairness, he said that nothing but his character could save him from the imputation that there was something very unfair in that proceeeding. He remembered that the right hon. Baronet, the present First Lord of the Treasury, in one of the three set speeches he made, stated, as one of the grounds on which he could not accede to the proposed measure of Her Majesty's Government on the sugar duties, that it had been so ill-advised and ill-considered, that an alteration had actually been made between the time of proposing the duty and that of printing it. But what an outcry there would have been if he had acted as the right hon. Baronet did with respect to the bill for regulating the trade of the British possessions! If he had proposed a corn bill for Canada, and left the House in a state of uncertainty afterwards whether Government would go on with it or not; and if at the same time he had said, as the right hon. Baronet did, that in consequence of the inconvenience which the trade was suffering from the uncertainty which prevailed respecting the Corn-laws, he begged and prayed the House to make haste in getting through his measure, there would have been no end to the attacks which he should have provoked. He should have been attacked in every possible way, by the fluency and talent of the right hon. Gentleman, (the Vice-President of the Board of Trade) and by the more effective and more solemn mode in which the right hon. Baronet at the head of her Majesty's Government would have expressed his censure, in three set speeches against a Government which had actually ventured to introduce a measure without considering all the details. There was another part of the scale of the right hon. Gentleman with respect to which the House had had no information whatever. He was starting with the admission that they were now to deal with a sliding scale. They had adhered to a sliding scale; that was the principle of the bill. They had disregarded all the modern opinions on this subject. It was admitted that, generally speaking, the merchants would be in favour of a fixed duty, but there were certain reasons so overwhelming that it was determined to adhere to the principle of a sliding-scale. Nevertheless, on two different points this principle seemed to be so exceedingly weak that the slides were put an end to, and he was anxious to learn from the right hon. Baronet the principle on which the two rests in the scale were introduced. On this subject there had been much mystery: a solemn silence had been observed. He had heard that many in the Government, and especially the right hon. Baronet, laid great stress on these two rests. "We begin," said the right hon. Gentleman, "from 51*s*. to 52*s*. Then we slide 1*s*., but there we stop. Our principle is good between 51*s*. and 52*s*., though it is not good when the duty comes to 18*s*.; above that there is a fixed duty. But the moment we come to 52*s*., between 52*s*. and 55*s*. our principle ceases—we have no slide, we have a fixed scale." He should be glad to learn why the rate at which we proceeded between 51*s*. and 52*s*. was on a sudden suspended between 52*s*. and 55*s*., and then again on a sudden we began to slide till we came down to 66*s*., when a fixed duty applied till the prices was 69*s*. There was something very remarkable about those numbers. In the scale proposed by Mr. Canning, and stated by him to have been framed by Lord Liverpool, the principle of the sliding scale was maintained throughout; there was neither rest nor any other amelioration; its authors adhered throughout to certain principles, and thus showed their reliance and confidence in them. They, however, were turned out, and the bill was rejected at that time by a transaction to which he would not allude further; but the right hon. Baronet and the noble Duke who was now in the other House came in and formed their Administration, and brought forward a plan which followed the sliding-scale up to this very point, from 65*s.* to 66*s.* There was something in this number which seemed inimical to the principle of a sliding-scale, for the old bill struck at that point into what was called a jumping scale, which continued to the vanishing point. That feature was now abandoned, although at the time it was thought a great advantage, and supposed to be one of the chief beauties of the plan. It was considered a proof of wisdom to set aside Mr. Canning's and Lord Liverpool's plan, and to substitute a jumping scale. But Mr. Canning had had his revenge, for of all the absurdities of the sliding-scale that was now admitted to be the most flagrant. At 66*s.* you jumped then, but now you pause. He should be glad to learn why the right hon. Baronet, who in 1828 was convinced that just at 66*s.* it was necessary to abandon the sliding-scale and to jump, should at the present moment now impose on us the necessity, not of jumping or sliding, but of falling back to complete quiescence by a halt. He should be happy to hear from the Government some explanation of this extraordinary change in their opinions. For his own part, he frankly told the right hon. Gentleman that the pauses would receive no opposition from him. He accepted them as an admission that the sliding-scale would not do pure and unmitigated; he took them as a confession that it was a failure. There must clearly be some important reason why the principle of the sliding scale, which was so admirable between 51*s.* and 52*s.* should cease and determine from 52*s.* to 55*s.*, and be replaced by a fixed duty. He should wish also to have some information as to the views by which the right hon. Baronet had been guided in fixing the amount at which he wished to have corn sold; but he admitted that nothing could be more absurd, more inconvenient, and more unsatisfactory than to have to discuss in committee of the whole House the price at which corn ought to be sold, but he could not help it. That was the object of the right hon. Baronet's bill, the fault of the principle he had chosen; but if the principle was unalterable, would the right hon. Baronet have the goodness to tell him how he had arrived at that result? The right hon. Baronet had half smothered him with papers, and he asked the right hon. Baronet to tell him out of those papers how he made out his calculation. A sort of solemnity had been observed as to the conduct of this inquiry. The newspapers teemed with accounts of the right hon. Baronet's exertions to obtain papers; and it was announced, that a gentleman had been sent abroad expressly to procure statistical information. It was understood, also, that the Vice-President of the Board of Trade was making inquiries in the home market as to the prices of grain. He thought the House should have that information before them. They had been told that the Cabinet was in anxious deliberation, and it was but right, that they should have the means of judging as to those deliberations, and the result to which they had led. The right hon. Baronet stated, that from 54*s.* to 58*s.* was the price which he proposed to secure to the farmer by his measure. He was anxious, although the process would be very dry and very dull, to go into the right hon. Baronet's figures, and test their accuracy, though the right hon. Baronet had found it necessary to go so much into details, that he was almost afraid of following him. Perhaps, however, he might be permitted to ask a few questions and look at a few figures, in order to see whether, in point of fact, the right hon. Gentleman's bill would have the effect which he stated, that he expected from it. He, of course, could not avail himself of the private information to which the right hon. Gentleman said he had access; he should go simply by the papers which that right hon. Gentleman had been good enough to give him, and really he had been much surprised to find each successive paper as it was put into his hand more and more conclusive against the right hon. Gentleman's scale. The hon. Gentleman opposite had remarked, that it would be an advantage to know what would have been the effect of the right hon. Baronet's plan if it had been enacted in former days. He thought, that was not a bad mode of testing its merits. He was afraid his figures differed in every possible way from those of the right hon. Baronet, but he wished to inquire, not from private information, but from the papers on the Table, what would have been the effect of the proposed scale if it had existed since 1828. He maintained, that there would be no trade in corn of any the slightest importance when the price in this country was at 60*s.* That was his strong impression; of course he might be wrong; it was difficult to arrive at certainty on such a subject; but if they would legislate upon it, they must expect to fall into mistakes. But he would state the opinion he had formed from considering the papers, so far as they went, and so far as he could understand them. The calculations of the right hon. Gentleman (the Secretary for the Home Department) had not in the least shaken his opinion on the subject; and as far as he could see corn would not be imported under 60*s.* He would not go through all the figures, but first it was necessary to fix what should be considered a fair allowance for freight and other extra charges. The right hon. Baronet allowed from 4*s.* to 5*s.* per quarter. He knew the right hon. Baronet had taken the figures from the return given by Mr. Meek, a gentleman of whose prudence and experience he was well aware, stating the expense of freight only; but if due consideration had been given to Mr. Meek's statements, it would have been seen, that there were other expenses which greatly increased the price of corn before it could be introduced into the English market. Evidently the whole amount of the price to which the foreign article would rise before it could compete with that of the English dealer must be looked to, and not merely the expense of freight. There was great risk in the trade, and the expense of insurance, as well as other items of charge, must be considered. He had mentioned the right hon. Baronet's own deduction from the papers he had himself furnished for the guidance of the House; but he would inquire whether the right hon. Baronet had correctly made that deduction. In page 37 of Mr. Meek's report, it was stated that a question was put as to the amount of freight, insurance, and the charges on the exportation of corn to England. What was the answer to this question? 4*s.* 6*d.*? Not at all. The freight was stated to be about 4*s.* or 5*s.* a quarter; the insurance in summer was said to be ½ per cent., and in winter 5 per cent. The total charges, including Sound dues, which were quite omitted by the right hon. Baronet, were about 6*s.* a quarter. To this there must be added, on account of expenses attending the sale when the corn was taken from ships to England, a sum of 4*s.* 6*d.* to 5*s.* a quarter, making in the whole about 10*s.* 6*d.* a quarter. This was the statement of Mr. Meek. If so much was said in September last about the necessity of additional information, and so much show of diligence in procuring it had been made, why did Ministers come down and tell the House that they threw their agent entirely overboard, and laid his statements aside, as not thinking it worth while to trouble themselves with considering them? From Dantzic, then, the charges would be as he had stated them, and from Stettin they would be about 10*s.* It was not his fault if the allowance was exorbitant. He would now try to follow the right hon. Baronet in his calculations. When the average price of wheat in England was 60*s.*, comparing it with the price at Dantzic, and taking the price of freight as he had stated it, and the duty proposed by the right hon. Baronet to be charged in his bill, he was prepared to show that there would be no competition between the importers of wheat from Dantzic and the English grower. He admitted that when the price was above 60*s.*, here there would be some importation. In 1828, then, the price in England averaged 60*s.* 5*d.*; he took it from the report of a committee of which both the right hon. Gentleman and the right hon. the Secretary for the Home Department were members. He would take this official document, which was of infinitely greater authority than any private information, as the basis of his calculation. In 1828, he found it was there stated that the price of wheat at Dantzic was 40*s.* 2*d.* Then 40*s.* + 10*s.* for the expenses of importation, with a duty of 12*s.*, would bring the price to 62*s.*, the price of English wheat being 60*s.* 5*d.* In 1829, 1830, and 1831, the average price in the English market was 64*s.* to 66*s.*, and he had already admitted that when the price here exceeded 60*s.* there might be some interference with the monopoly. The price fell in 1832 to 58*s.* 8*d.* In that year the Dantzic price was 38*s.*, which, adding 10*s.* and a duty of 14*s.*, would give a price of 62*s.* on importation. There could, therefore, have been no interference in that year. In 1833 the price of English wheat was 52*s.* 11*d.*; the price at Dantzic was 30*s.*; the duty according to the scale of the right hon. Baronet would have been 18*s.*, and adding

10*s.* the price would be brought to 58*s.*, while the English price would be 52*s.* He came now to 1834. a year when prices were extremely low in both countries. In England it was 46*s.*; in Dantzic it was 25*s.*, which, with a duty of 20*s.* + 10*s.* expenses, would make the price of Dantzic wheat imported 55*s.*, very much higher than the English price of 46s. In 1835 the price of wheat in England, according to Mr. Wilson's statement, was 39*s.*; at Dantzic it was 32*s.* 9*d.*, making, with the duty of 20*s.*, 52*s.* 9*d.* In 1836 the price in England was 48*s.* 6*d.*, in Dantzic 33*s.* 6d.; which, with the duty of 20*s.* and the expenses of freight, &c., 10*s.*, made 63*s.* 6*d.*, while in this country wheat was selling at 48*s.* 6*d.* In 1837 the price in both places approximated very closely —Dantzic wheat being 39*s.* 4*d.*, or with the duty 56*s.* 4*d.*, and the English wheat 55*s.* 10*d.* But it was in 1837, when there were long continued low prices in England, and when the ports were shut, the prices abroad being clearly below those that would rule under a free or regular trade, it was in alluding to this period that the hon. Member had shown himself bold indeed; and he thanked the right hon. Vice-President of the Board of Trade for having furnished him to-day with a return which was in direct opposition to his own proposition. There was nothing as a test upon this subject to be compared to the experience furnished by the wheat actually brought into the English market. There had been a certain trade since 1828, and a return had been laid on the Table of the duty payable on each quantity of grain, the time it was introduced into England, and at what price. This afforded a conclusive mode of ascertaining the price, because the duty being deducted at once showed at what price the corn was introduced. Up to 1834 he found there was no trade whatever worth speaking of. From 1834 to 1837 some little wheat was introduced at a great loss, paying a high duty. Looking for any useful calculation, if hon. Gentlemen would turn to the paper delivered that morning, they would see that no corn whatever was introduced into this country under a duty of 20*s.* 8*d.* Now that was very high. When the duty was 20*s.* 8*d.* the average price in England must be between 66*s.* and 67*s.*; deducting, therefore, from 66s. 20*s.* 8*d.*, which must have been paid as duty, there remained the price received free of duty — 45*s.* 4*d.* To his mind this was conclusive, that, from 1828 down to the present time, there had been no important importation of corn under the price of 45*s.* 4*d.* His hon. Friend the Member for Lambeth had entered into a variety of calculations which led to the same conclusion. The consular returns, and the calculations he had himself made, came to that point. In another part of the papers delivered that day he found that in Guernsey, where there was a free-trade, the average price of foreign grain, from 1828 up to the present year, was 45*s.* In Jersey they also distinguished the price of foreign and home grown grain, and the average price of the former from 1828 ruled about 48*s.* He did not attach much weight to the returns from Guernsey and Jersey, two small islands in a particular position, yet it was very remarkable that they even went against, not for, the right hon. Baronet. The right hon. Baronet mentioned the case of Elsinore the other night, and calculated the price at which foreign wheat might be introduced into England from the price it bore at Elsinore. The right hon. Baronet, quoting Mr. Macgregor, had stated the average price at Elsinore for the last twenty-five years to be 28*s.* 10*d.* The fact, however, was, that this was not the price at Elsinore, but the average price of Denmark; the price might, nevertheless, vary in every port. The right hon. Baronet might as well quote the price at Riga as affording a necessarily accurate average over the whole of Russia, or calculate the price at Dantzic as the average price of Prussia. The price then which the right hon. Baronet relied upon was the average of the whole of Denmark—not the price at a particular port at all. Of course there might be some disturbing influence operating in that respect; but what said the right hon. Baronet's own papers? Even the price at Dantzic rose from 28*s.* to 30*s.*, when there was a demand from abroad, and Mr. Macgregor stated that he felt satisfied the returns were not to be relied upon as indicative of what prices would be if there were any corn trade with England. The prices would then rise, and he stated distinctly that from 30*s.* to 35*s.* would be the price on which we should have to reckon, if there were anything like a corn trade with this country. Would the right hon. Baronet have the goodness to answer him one simple question with regard to Elsinore? It was admitted that the price at Dantzic averaged 36*s*., and the right hon. Baronet attempted to persuade the House that the price at Elsinore was to be 28*s*. He knew the right hon. Baronet's great abilities, but he must be a wonderful conjuror indeed if he could tell how, or for what possible purpose, the corn merchants—those innocents of the Corn Exchange, as he called them—preferred going to Dantzic to buy wheat at 36*s*., paying a greater freight, insurance, and other charges, when they could get it for 28*s*. at Elsinore. Was there not on the face of it—he would not say absurdity—but the most glaring improbability? It was quite clear the wheat was not the same. No one would say that the wheat at Elsinore was as good as that at Dantzic, any more than he could fairly compare any sort of wheat with the best of English growth; but to persuade him that while the average price of fair wheat was 36*s*. at Dantzic, there was at Elsinore an interminable store at 28*s*. that would swamp the country, was perfectly out of the question. In fact, on the face of it, the statement appeared incredible and absurd.

Sir *R. Peel*: I did not say there was an "interminable store," nor does Mr. Macgregor.

Mr. *F. Baring* understood the right hon. Baronet to state that much land would be turned to grain, and that an enormous quantity of it would be cultivated. That word "grain" frightened everybody. One hon. Gentleman used it with reference to corn; an Irishman would use it with reference to oats, and would be perfectly satisfied that all the land at Elsinore must be turned into the cultivation of oats. Another hon. Gentleman, who had talked to them of corn, currency, and Campbell's lines, might perhaps fix his standard on the wild and stormy steep of Elsinore, and declare his belief that the land would be turned to barley. But, after all, the average export of wheat from Dantzic was only 160,000 quarters. Taking the greatest exportation for the last twenty years from Elsinore, the bug-bear of to night, as Odessa was the bug-bear of last night, he found it was 200,000 quarters; and allowing the increase of 25 per cent., if there were a regular trade with England, according to the calculation of Mr. Macgregor, they would have the very fearful swamping sum of only 250,000 quarters, which the right hon. Baronet appeared to think would regulate the price and consumption of 26,000,000 of Englishmen. He begged pardon for having detained the House so long, but he hoped he had confined himself to the scale of the right hon. Baronet, and had not diverged into extraneous matter.

Mr. *W. E. Gladstone* would endeavour to follow the right hon. Gentleman through the several points raised in the course of his speech; and, although the right hon. Gentleman had found it convenient to name his speech by reference to recent party strifes, he should certainly endeavour not to imitate the tone or temper of his remarks, and would at least commence his remarks in perfect calmness. First of all with respect to the system of averages. It certainly did astonish him to hear the late President of the Board of Trade give some countenance the other night to an estimate of the effect to be produced on the averages by the proposed change in the mode of taking them, of not less than 5*s*. per quarter upon the whole average price of England. He would designate that statement at once as capable of being arithmetically proved to be one of the grossest absurdities that ever had been broached. He would go a little into the details, and show the committee on what grounds he ventured so to designate the statement which the right hon. Gentleman did not altogether take upon himself, but which he signified to the House was, if not altogether credible, at least not altogether undeserving of attention. It was most important, however, to observe, in the first place, with respect to the new list of towns, that the intentions of his right hon. Friend had been clearly and explicitly declared; he had given the pledge, that, so far as human wit could go, Parliament should not be asked by the Government to adopt any change which was to produce a sensible and material effect upon the averages. If, therefore, anything like a probable case could be shown of a serious effect on the averages, the list of towns already provisionally laid on the Table, subject to be corrected by further local information, would be open to alteration. In fact, with regard to these estimates, he must say the right hon. Gentleman, who put forward the proposition relating to an influence to the amount of 5*s*. per quarter, was under obligations to his hon. Friend, the Member for Lincolnshire, who countenanced not that statement itself, but was prepared to go even so much as two-fifths of the length. He was, on the other hand, prepared to show, that even that modified and reduced estimate was obviously and altogether beyond any rational calculation. If he took the population of the towns which now made returns for the purpose of being included in the averages, he found that, with the exception of London, it amounted to just 2,500,000, and with London added, the whole amounted, according to the census of 1831, to 3,982,000, or, in round numbers, to 4,000,000. The new towns included in the list on the Table of the House gave a population of 1,623,000. He did not pretend now to give the committee conclusive information; he hoped he should yet be able to produce something more, for the list was still in the progress of correction and digestion; but what he did pretend to do at this moment was, to show that the estimates advanced, whether by the right hon. Gentleman opposite or by the hon. Member for Lincolnshire, were altogether unsupported by reasonable expectations. He was now going to test the value of the anticipations of the hon. Member for Lincolnshire, that the averages would be influenced to the extent of 2*s.* a quarter by the change. But first of all let him say, in answer to the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Baring), that the hon. Member for Lincolnshire was not properly to be designated as an unwilling witness. On the contrary, he believed his hon. Friend was anxious to represent this plan to the agricultural interest of England in as favourable a light as he thought in fairness it would bear; and, so far from being an unwilling witness, he was a willing and eager witness to show to the English farmers, that the protection offered them came, if not up to the point he desired, at least so high as to be a sufficient protection. The hon. Member, then, thought that a difference of 2*s.* per quarter would be the effect of this mode of taking the averages. Now, the population of the new towns being 1,600,000, and the population of the old towns 4,000,000, it was obvious that the former bore to the latter the proportion of about two to five. They had no means of proving the amount of grain sold in those new towns, for no official returns were made for those markets; but he assumed, that the quantities sold per head of the population was, on the whole, the same in the new as in the old towns. He was not aware of any cause materially to vary the quantities, nor if there were any such cause, in which direction it would operate, and further any slight difference either way, could not materially affect results. How did this affect the case? The new towns being to the old ones as two to five in number, it followed, if the infusion of the new towns was to raise the aggregate average by 2*s.* per quarter, that in those new towns taken as a whole, the average price of wheat must be lower by 7*s.* a quarter than in the old towns. Now, was there any man who could get up in his place and pretend that such would be the case? This was a statement not to be disputed; it was a clear arithmetical question. As the quantity sold to a population of 1,600,000 would bear something like the proportion of two to five, when compared with the amount sold to 4,000,000, if the price of wheat in the former lowered the whole average 2*s.*, the price in the new towns must be no less than 7*s.* lower than in the old towns. He again asked whether there was a man in the committee who would get up and say he believed such to be the case? And this too, it should be observed, was merely with reference to the qualified estimate of the hon. Member for Lincolnshire. How did this apply to the estimate of the right hon. Gentleman opposite? If that estimate were true, it followed, unless he should be mistaken in his calculations, that the average price of wheat in the new towns must be lower than in the old towns by a sum of about 17*s.* 6*d.* per quarter. Let the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Baring), who had been so severe on them for not paying sufficient attention to the details of their plan; let the right hon. Gentleman himself (a late Chancellor of the Exchequer, professor of the art of figures as he was; let him, when he next addressed the House, show the reasonableness of this moderate estimate, that the average price of corn in these new towns would prove to be 7*s.* per quarter lower than in the old ones. In point of fact, he believed it was impossible for any man, looking through the new list of towns, to form any estimate amounting to even one-half of that difference. Of course that list could not comprehend the very same proportion of the great markets, for this reason, that the old list selected the greatest centres of population and consumption; but the next greatest markets had been added. It might again be urged, that they had no means of ascertaining officially the amount of grain sold in these new markets; and there was some difficulty in forming an exact estimate. But this he would state, and the facts had greatly surprised himself, as at least some approximation to the truth. The greatest centres of population and consumption, where relatively to space there was the greatest accumulation of human beings, and consequently the greatest demand for corn, and therefore also the highest price, and where more particularly the operations in the corn trade and the scope for speculation, in order to influence the averages were most extensive, were the city of London and the West Riding of Yorkshire. Now, he had an inquiry made into the relations borne for all the weeks of three successive years, 1839-41, by the London and Yorkshire markets to the average of the residue of the kingdom, without London and Yorkshire; of course there would be no objection to place the return, if it were desired, on the Table of the House. In 1839, singularly enough, down to the end of the month of June, the prices in London and Yorkshire, the two great centres of population, consumption and speculation. as returned to the inspectors and controllers of corn returns, were actually lower than the rest of the kingdom. In the latter part of the year the season of speculation came on, and the London and Yorkshire prices, instead of being lower, went above the general prices; they rose as much, in one particular week, as 6*s*. 11*d*. higher than the rest of the kingdom. He would read to the House the relation of the prices of the London and Yorkshire market with the prices of the rest of the kingdom for the first three months of the year 1839:—In the first week the London and Yorkshire prices were lower by 10*d*.; in the second week, they were 4*d*. lower; in the third, 1*d*. lower; in the fourth, 9*d*. lower; in the fifth, 1*s*. 2*d*. lower; in the sixth and seventh, lower; in the eight, 1*s*. 4*d*. lower; in the ninth, 2*s*. 4*d*. lower; in the tenth, 2*s*. 6*d*. lower; and in the eleventh and twelfth week likewise, 2*s*. 6*d*. lower. The prices continued generally lower, compared with the rest of the kingdom, until the end of June; but about August they rose decidedly higher. The London and Yorkshire prices were, in the different weeks of August, as follows:—In the first week they were equal with the rest of the kingdom; in the second, 3*s*. higher; in the third, 2*s*. 2*d*. higher; in the fourth, 2*s*. 11*d*. higher; and in the fifth, 1*s*. 9*d*. higher. In September, the month of speculation, the London and Yorkshire prices were, in the first week, 3*s*. 2*d*. higher than the rest of the kingdom; in the second week, 4*s*. 10*d*. higher; in the third week, 4*s*. 11*d*. higher; and in the fourth week, 6*s*. 11*d*. higher. In October, they were 5*s*. 6*d*. higher in the first week. They then fell a little, and again rose. in the year 1840 the result was as nearly as possible the same. To the end of the month of June the London and Yorkshire prices were decidedly lower than the prices of the rest of the kingdom. From July to August, when speculation prevailed, they were considerably higher. For the rest of the year they were sometimes higher and sometimes lower; but the greatest difference was a difference of 2*s*. 6*d*., and that was a difference of the rest of the kingdom over the London and Yorkshire prices. This was a phenomenon, a solution of which he should be glad to receive from the wisdom of hon. Gentlemen, whether sitting on the Opposition or Ministerial side of the House. In the year 1841 the London and Yorkshire prices were, with rare exceptions, higher than the prices of the rest of the kingdom; but the difference was only moderate, amounting to 1*s*. 6*d*. or 1*s*., until the season of speculation, from July to August, arrived, when they rose to an excess of 6*s*. 8*d*. at the maximum. They then fell, and for the rest of the year they were sometimes higher and sometimes lower, but the difference was not more than from 1*s*. to 3*s*. He laid this statement before the committee as an approximation to the actual facts of the case, and as such he was not aware that it could be impeached. He trusted Parliament would have an opportunity of obtaining further evidence; but if there were any man credulous enough to believe that the average prices of wheat in one list of considerable towns were 7*s*. lower than in another set of generally corresponding character, the results which he had stated might tend to undeceive him. The right hon. Gentleman had subsequently alluded in terms of great exultation to the proposition which he had the honour to make, when he moved certain resolutions in regard to our colonial trade; and had attacked him for proposing to lay the enormous duty of 3*s*. on wheat imported into Canada. Now, suppose Government had seen cause to change their minds on the merits of any such question, they would not have been ashamed to have declared so. He was not learned in these matters, but he conceived that a more monstrous doctrine even in a country governed by an absolute monarch, much more in one enjoying free institutions, could not be broached, than that the executive government should be expected to stand by every detail however slight of every measure. [Lord *J. Russell.* That was what he used to say.] Nor was he aware that Gentlemen on his side had been accustomed to take exception to it. But he would remind the committee, that the noble Lord opposite did not, unfortunately, confine the alterations of his measures within such moderate bounds. The right hon. Gentleman had alluded to the alteration he made on the question of the sugar duties, and represented it as an analogous case, stating, that though he saw cause to alter his proposition yet he was blamed for doing so. Now, in the first place, he must observe, that that alteration was of a vital character; and in the second place, it was made without notice of any description to the House. When any alteration should be made in his propositions, he promised that due notice should be given of such change. [Mr. *F. Baring:* The alteration in the sugar duties was printed on the very morning when the expected discussion, which excited the anxiety of the whole kingdom, was to come on;] and the paper came into the hands of Members so late, that the noble Lord the Member for Liverpool entered the House to make his resolution, not knowing that such a paper was in existence. But he would not go further into these matters. With respect to the question which had been alluded to, he believed that no one in that House would contend that any regulation ought to be adopted in the new Corn-law which should raise a new barrier as against our trade with the United States. He had proposed laying a duty of 3*s.* on wheat imported into Canada. Should Parliament, however, lay a merely nominal duty on the importation of Canadian flour and wheat into this country, he would not venture to pledge himself that it would not be right to lay the duty on the importation of American wheat into Canada, which stood in his resolution; but, if Parliament should adhere to the principle of a 5*s.* duty on the importation of Canadian wheat and flour in this country, in that case the 3*s.* duty would not be pressed upon the House. [Mr. *Labouchere.* Is there to be a duty on American flour?] That question was scarcely before the House. But as an intention had been expressed to question the constitutional right of Parliament to lay such a duty, and as his silence might be construed into an admission that doubt existed on that head, he would at once state that,—as to the constitutional question involved in that duty, no doubt rested on the minds of those who introduced the measure; and likewise, that a duty on American flour was to be proposed. The right hon. Gentleman had afterwards proceeded to discuss the merits of the sliding scale, and objected to the system of rests or levels, or whatever they might be called. The right hon. Gentleman exclaimed, "What a strange and extraordinary proceeding! Where before there was an accelerated rate, there is now introduced a slow rate, nay an actual suspension, of descent." Why, the fact was, that this accelerated rate of descent was the cause of great mischiefs; and was the Government fairly liable to blame for attempting to cure those inconveniences by removing their cause, and substituting a scale of an opposite character, and the astonishment of the right hon. Gentleman seemed to be grounded simply on the fact, that the Government had employed by way of remedy, an arrangement the reverse of that which had produced the existing evils? The right hon. Gentleman asked what was the object of this system of rests? It was obvious enough. It was to induce parties, when corn was at a price indicating a critical state of the market, and showing a tendency to rise to a rate inconvenient to the consumer, to bring out their corn, if they had hitherto held it back, and thus prevent the pressure which might otherwise ensue. The right hon. Gentleman was sarcastic on the subject of these rests, and said that their introduction was equivalent to a fixed duty, and that the sliding scale was not produced by the Government in a pure and unmixed form. What an unfortunate subject of raillery for the right hon. Gentleman or any of the late colleagues of the noble Lord on the opposite side of the House. Had they not the words of the noble Lord still ringing in their ears when he surrendered that fortress, the doctrine of an uniform inflexible duty, which so long as he was able he had gallantly defended? Did they not recollect the noble Lord's confession of the other night, that a fixed duty must be abandoned? The right hon. Gentleman adverted to the higher rest in the scale and inquired why it was proposed. The microscopic eye of the right hon. Gentleman was really too severe for any measure which human wit could devise. Now with respect to that proposal, he would only say that he thought if the committee considered 16*s.* a proper duty at 56*s.* price, and 20*s.* at 50*s.*, here was a sufficient justification of the form of that part of the scale. Another point of the right hon. Gentleman was, that there would be no trade in corn under the proposed law, until corn reached 60*s.* The right hon. Gentleman ascribed to the right hon. Baronet near him, an intention in proposing this measure to secure to the farmer a price between 54*s.* and 58*s.* It was strange, that such sentiments should be ascribed to the right hon. Baronet, when, in point of fact, he said nothing of the kind in the first speech he delivered, and when, within the last twenty-four hours, he had had occasion distinctly to deny that he had ever uttered anything resembling such a statement. The right hon. Baronet said, he should be glad if prices were to range between 54*s.* and 58*s.*, but he accompanied the expression of this wish with an avowal, that in his belief it was totally impossible to fix prices by legislative enactments. But now let the committee examine the position, that there would be no trade in corn under the amended scale, until the price reached 60*s.* He had some doubt whether it was fair, after so much had been said by him on a former night, to detain the committee by any speculations or statements of figures on this point; but the right hon. Gentleman opposite had given them a sufficiency of figures, and so had the hon. Member for Lincolnshire. Their figures were very plausible; taken alone, each might seem demonstrative, but unfortunately they established contradictory conclusions. The right hon. Gentleman declared there would be no trade in corn until prices rose to 60*s.*, while the hon. Member for Lincolnshire said, it would go hard with the farmer when prices ranged from 50*s.* to 55*s.* Let the committee look at the facts of the case. He would refer to a document containing the classified results of a great mass of information received from our consuls abroad, and relating to the point he was now discussing—the price at which great quantities of corn (and that was the substantial question they had to consider) might be expected to be sent to this country. According to that report, 2,200,000 quarters might be expected to be imported at a price free on board of 37*s.* There were three places, Riga, Rotterdam, and Antwerp, at which corn would be higher in price, but the quantity which might be expected from them was not included in the amount of 2,200,000 quarters. He was now dealing with a very large quantity; and this quantity, if landed at 42*s.* might pay a duty of 15*s.*, and enter here when prices were at 57*s.* or 58*s.*, and not as the right hon. Gentleman said when they were over 60*s.* This was a matter of calculation, and, of course, admitted of no demonstration. Certain quantities might be introduced at lower rates. But this statement did not apply to the whole amount of the corn specified. In certain ports, the price was considerably lower than in others,—in Odessa and Elsinore for instance. From the latter port, 175,000 quarters might be exported at the price of 28*s.* 10*d.*, and from the former port, 150,000 quarters at the price of 26*s.* Mr. Meek calculated the freight and charges at 10*s.* 6*d.*, from some port in the Baltic, but it was hardly fair to suppose that the gentlemen from whom Mr. Meek derived his information on every point, at every place, must be infallible with respect to all details without exception. He was indeed firmly persuaded, that he should be more near the mark in calculating 8*s.* for these charges; for he knew that persons connected with the corn trade, and therefore having every reason to procure as free a trade as possible, acknowledged that 8*s.* would be sufficient to cover the charges. He would therefore take the sum at 8*s.* Now, it must not be forgotten that a large quantity of corn was grown in this country, and it must not be forgotten, too, that that sum of 8*s.* would pay for the transport of the foreign corn to the markets, and the highest markets in England. The British farmer got, it was true, his price, but they must deduct from it the expense of bringing his corn to market, which would amount to 2*s.* or 2*s.* 6*d.* per quarter, which might be fairly set off against the sum paid by the importer; and this, consequently, left about 5*s.* to be put down to the debit of the importer of corn from abroad. Taking, then, the sum of 5*s.* for the charges from Elsinore and assuming also as in fair proportion 10*s.* from Odessa, and computing all the expenses, the result would be that, 150,000 quarters might be brought from Odessa for 36*s.* 6*d.*, and 175,000 quarters from

Elsinore for 38*s*. He did not assume, that the quality of the corn would be on the average equal to English wheat. Thus they would have for less than 40*s*. the quarter 325,000 quarters of wheat brought to this country from Odessa and Elsinore. Such was the result of the information furnished by the British consuls. And supposing a duty of 16*s*. per quarter paid by it, the price would not exceed 56*s*. in the British market. Further, how stood the case with respect to Dantzic? From that place 315,000 quarters might be expected; and, taking the information obtained by the hon. Gentleman opposite, the information supplied by Mr. Hubbard, it appeared that the average price for the last ten years had been 37*s*. 10*d*. If he added 5*s*. to that for the excess of expense in bringing the corn from the Baltic, the price would be raised to 42*s*. 7*d*., and Dantzic wheat, which was equal in quality to English wheat, might pay a duty of 15*s*. per quarter. The price, consequently in the British market of Dantzic wheat would then be 57*s*. The right hon. Gentleman had taunted the Members on the Ministerial side, with an indisposition to refer to the information supplied by the agents of the Government, and particularly the information furnished by Mr. Meek. He conceived, that the right hon. Gentleman himself, had been particularly wary or else particularly fortunate in the selection of his extracts from Mr. Meek. He had raised a great question with respect to the corn of Denmark, and disagreed from Mr. Meek's statement respecting the price of 28*s*. 10*d*. Now let the committee attend to what Mr. Meek said. Mr. Meek, in page thirty-three of his report, stated

> "That the prices of corn in Denmark have, during the last twenty-five years, averaged for wheat 28*s*. 10*d*. per quarter; and, considering the depression of the corn market during the greater part of that period, and that the prospect of a permanent sale of corn in England, will be likely to render the continental markets more steady and firm than they have hitherto been, it is probable that the prices free on board would not be much below, for wheat, from 30*s*. to 31*s*. per quarter."

That, therefore, was an answer to the hon. Gentleman's remarks respecting the price of corn in Denmark. If they took his amount and added 5*s*. to that 30*s*., for the cost of importation of Danish wheat into this country, it would make it 35*s*. and on this showing it might then pay a duty of 18*s*. and be sold at 52*s*. or 53*s*. The right hon. Gentleman had not confined himself to saying that no quantity capable of seriously affecting the British prices could be admitted under 60*s*., but had been so bold as to contend, that no trade in corn worth mentioning, could be carried on until the price was over 60*s*. a quarter in this country. Now, he had shown by the authority of Mr. Meek; and he had every reason to believe, that a certain quantity of corn which Denmark might yield might be imported into and sold in this country at 53*s*. or 54*s*., and, likewise, that from that point up to 60*s*. a quarter, there would be an increasing power of importation never reaching its maximum, indeed, or even anything like it, until the price passed 60*s*., but yet, undeniably allowing a considerable trade in corn between the prices of 53*s*. or 55*s*. and 60*s*. a quarter. Then the right hon. Gentleman referred to what had been the case under the former law, and he appeared to rely on the circumstance that no corn paid more than 20*s*. 8*d*. duty. [Mr. *Baring:* Since the year 1838.] That was not quite accurate.

Mr. *Baring:* What I said was, that there had been no importation worth considering under 20*s*. 8*d*. There were one or two occasions on which it happened, but that was perfectly intelligible.

Mr. *Gladstone* would agree with the right hon. Gentleman, that there was no importation worth considering much above 20*s*. 8*d*., or therefore at a price much below 66*s*. But would those Gentlemen who told them so much of the vicious operation of the old Corn-laws, in inducing holders to hold back their stocks, come forward now and urge precisely opposite arguments, and say that, because no corn was ever imported at a price less than 60*s*., it followed that no corn could have been afforded to be introduced? Did the right hon. Gentleman mean to argue, that because no considerable entries for consumption of corn took place at a duty over 20*s*. 8*d*., therefore no considerable entries could take place under a different law at a net price of importation below 46*s*.? But he did not value much, he confessed, in their more minute details or particulars, any estimates which the most able persons might make with respect to the precise prices and amounts and quantities at which we might expect importation to take place into this country, and much less any which in the discharge of his duty he might presume to submit to the House. He could not, however, help adverting to the fact, that the general opinion of the country was with the Government on this subject and against the right hon. Gentleman. He must confess, that in matters of this kind he was influenced very much more by the calculations of practical men of business than by those of Members of Parliament or Members of the Government, however well qualified they might be to handle the general subject. Could it then be denied, that there was a very general feeling in this country that the trade in corn would be, he did not say constantly open to the admission of a quantity which would greatly affect consumption, and equally affect prices, but could it be denied, that certainly the prevailing sentiments of the commercial class were, that the trade in corn would be opened to a considerable degree at prices several shillings below 60*s.*? Might he for one moment refer to the testimony on this subject of a very important and influential class—the class of millers? The millers most certainly were by no means universally friendly to the present Corn-law. They had been sufficiently urgent during several weeks past in their applications to the Board of Trade on this subject; and of those gentlemen were some who had pleaded with the greatest ability, and with an ingenuity he had hardly ever seen surpassed. They were even among the leaders of the movement against the existing Corn-laws; but those Gentlemen, one and all, whatever their opinions on the Corn-law, held the doctrine, that the trade under the new law, if not permanently open to the full extent, would be open at least to such an extent, and at such prices that importation would be almost constant, that it would be the general rule, and not merely occasional and exceptional as under the old law. They would be, consequently, as they alleged, great sufferers themselves, but as to the fact, they were uniform in their sentiments. And those gentlemen, he ought to say, had received great support, and their sentiments great countenance, from a large body of Members of Parliament on both that, and the Opposition side of the House, themselves too opposed to the Corn-laws. He would not now detain the House at any greater length. He had endeavoured to show, that with respect to the averages, even in the estimate of the hon. Member for North Lincolnshire, and much more in that of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, the late President of the Board of Trade if he admitted the statements he had made to be his own, there were very great and grievous exaggerations, and he thought he had given some evidence to the committee in support of those views. With respect to the importation of corn he had referred to the figures contained in the authentic documents before the House; he had referred to the opinions of gentlemen who were most opposed to the whole system of the Corn-laws, and he had proved, as far as could be proved in this stage of the discussion, that the effect of the bill of his right hon. Friend would be considerably to facilitate the trade in corn in this country at prices several shillings below the point of 60*s.* a quarter.

Mr. *Labouchere* had so recently addressed the House at great length on the subject of the measure proposed by the Government, that he should not have trespassed on their time upon this occasion but for the appeal that was made to him by the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down. In the first place, he must complain of the position in which the House was placed with regard to the question of the averages by the course which the Government had pursued. The right hon. Gentleman said, it was the intention of the Government to lay before the House, before this bill was concluded, important information which they were in possession of, which would enable the House to form a judgment in what way the averages would be affected by the proposed measure. He thought, that looking to the time the Government had had to consider this question, and that they had made, as was obviously incumbent upon them to do, extensive and close inquiries as to what would be the effect on the averages of the measure they proposed, it was hardly fair to the House not to have laid on the Table the information, before hon. Members were called upon to decide upon such a scale of duty. It was very well to say, as the right hon. Gentleman said, "If you can prove to me that the averages will affect the scale in a measure I do not intend, I will reconsider the scale;" but he did not think it was fair to the House to ask them to pledge themselves to a scale of duty, at the same time saying, that if they saw reason to think from the information that might be laid on the Table that the averages would be materially affected by the alteration of the system, he would afterwards come back and reconsider the scale. That was a very illogical mode of proceeding, and the position in which it placed the House was not such as they ought to be placed in. Notwithstanding what the right hon. Gentleman said, as to its being a very great exaggeration on his part, he would repeat that it was the opinion of practical men, whose views on this subject were entitled to attention, that there would be a three-fold operation of the different parts of the system of the right hon. Gentleman. First, the addition of 150 towns to the towns where the averages were now taken; next, putting those returns of the averages into the hands of the excise, instead of the hands of the corn inspectors; and lastly, the discouragement which would be given to speculation and fictitious sales. It had been supposed that the scale which the right hon. Gentleman gave, as regarded the first of the three operations of it, might be to affect the averages, not less than 5*s*., although of course this was only conjectural; and the right hon. Gentleman was evidently not a little nettled to find that what he had stated received support from an hon. Gentleman on the other side of the House—from a quarter, indeed, which he did not expect. That hon. Gentleman said, that his statement was in principle true; that he had made inquiry upon the subject, with great care, and that from the best information he had received he thought that the addition of 150 towns would affect the averages to the extent of 2*s*. If the hon. Gentleman attributed the effect to one of the three causes, he thought that it might be possible that the effect of the three would be such as he had stated. He took the first, however, at the low estimate of the hon. Member for Lincolnshire (Mr. Christopher) viz., 2*s*., and he thought the right hon. Gentleman would feel himself bound to redeem the pledge he had made, he was sure, in good faith, that if it could be made out to him that the averages would be affected to any extent, he was perfectly ready to allow a reconsideration of the scale of duty which he proposed. He had not expected, however, that the House would have had to discuss the question of the averages that evening. Certain returns had been made which would furnish information to the House, and, in addition to that, the Government would lay other documents on the Table; and they would discuss the question with more advantage when they had that information. But, at the same time, when he was told there was so little reason to expect that the result of the change, as regarded the averages, would be such as he had stated, he could not help reading a few figures which, whilst this discussion was going on, an hon. Friend had procured for him from the library. He was then speaking of the effect of the London average with general averages of the country, and of course if they added 150 towns to the 150 already existing it would lower the effect of that London average. On the 25th of June, 1841, the general average of the country was 63*s*. 5*d*., whilst the London average was 68*s*. 3*d*. At Cirencester it was 60*s*.; at Bristol 60*s*. When he saw, then, the immense effect that the London average had on the general result, hon. Gentlemen could not be astonished when he apprehended that the effect of adding 150 towns to those from which the averages were now collected would be such as he had represented. Again, he found that on the 13th of August, 1840, the general average of the country was 72*s*. 5*d*., whilst at London it was 76*s*. 9*d*. That would show how important an effect the London market had on the general average of the country, and how great a result might be obtained if they diminished that effect by adding so many towns to the list. He confessed that from a cursory perusal of the list of the new towns, it did appear to him that that list bore upon its face marks of great haste and very little examination on the part of the Government. He was told, indeed, that one of those towns, New Bolingbroke, in Lincolnshire, did not exist at all; that although it appeared in their list of towns, it did not appear in the map of the country. An hon. Member who was connected with the county of Kent also told him that another of the towns—namely, New Romney, had no market. The right hon. Gentleman who had last spoken seemed to think that he gave a conclusive answer to the statements that had been made respecting those new towns when he read an account of their population. Now he thought it must be obvious to every one that a mere statement of the population of a small market-town was not a very strong proof of the quantity of corn that was sold at the market there, or of its consequence as a market. He had heard with the greatest regret the announcement that was made that evening by the right hon. Gentleman the Vice-President of the Board of Trade with regard to the intention of the Government upon a point which had so long been under consideration—namely, the duty upon grain and flour imported from the United States. He was not about to enter into the constitutional point; but he heard with regret the reason which the right hon. Gentleman gave for retaining the duty on the importation of corn from America into Canada. He was not prepared to state positively that that duty was unconstitutional, but he held it to be unjust. There was this distinction between this duty and other colonial duties. It was not to protect any articles of produce in the British market, but, by an indirect process, to protect the landowners of England. That was the object of such duty. He believed it was perfectly novel, and he would say, on the part of the colonies, that, though he did not assert that it was unconstitutional or beyond their power, yet, it appeared to him to be unjust. He would not follow the right hon. Gentleman in all the calculations which he had made in answer to his right hon. Friend. He was quite willing to leave that discussion between them as it was; but he did not think that anything which the right hon. Gentleman had said shook the effect which the statements and calculations of his right hon. Friend had made. There was, however, one expression of the right hon. Gentleman which certainly surprised him. Finding that the information which was laid on the Table of the House was entirely adverse to him, and that Mr. Meek's papers were completely at variance with his statements, the right hon. Gentleman had thrown over the whole mass of evidence; he said it was quite true that they had all the information which they had been at so much pains to collect; that it was stated that the cost of importation of foreign corn into this country amounted to 10*s.* a quarter; "but," said the right hon. Gentleman, "I have consulted distinguished persons, and they are of a contrary opinion, and I prefer their opinion." Now, he thought it was impossible for the right hon. Gentleman to expect that the House would agree with him in that; they could only judge by the papers that were laid before the House, and as they had not that information which the right hon. Gentleman quoted, he could not expect them to put it in opposition to the documents that were before them. He did not know that it was necessary for him to trouble the House further; but he could not sit down without expressing his surprise that the right hon. Gentleman should have omitted to address himself at all to the motion before the House. When he saw the manner in which the agricultural interests were treated by her Majesty's Ministers, he must say that he thought they were in a very sorry plight. The way in which they had received this long-prepared and solemnly announced proposition, without the ceremony of a word in reply, showed their feeling on the subject. But he supposed that the Government considered that the opposition which was now made on their part to this bill was not very serious. The Member for North Lincolnshire, having made his speech, and having satisfied his sense of duty to his constituents in a manner which they would appreciate, had, as he believed, no serious intention of pressing his views on the Government. He, therefore, could not but say that the right hon. Gentleman, although somewhat departing from the usual practice of the House, had exercised a very sound discretion in not noticing the motion then before them.

Sir *J. Tyrell* said, the agricultural Members of that (the Ministerial) side of the House had been accused of being attached to the silent system. He regretted he could not retort the compliment upon hon. Gentlemen opposite; because, after seven nights' debate, more of sound and less of real argument it never fell to his lot to listen to in that House. He wished to call the attention of the House to the consideration of the proposition that was then before it. He believed it to be true, that one right hon. Gentleman on the other side of the House, and another right hon. Gentleman on his own side, had, for reasons best known to themselves, abstained from touching upon the real question before the House. Without going into the details and calculations of the two right hon. Gentlemen on the other side, he would say that he should be most happy to find that their figures were correct. He was afraid that, with that misfortune which followed them when in office, it would not be so, but he should be happy if, in that solitary instance, they might prove correct. The right hon. Member for Portsmouth, in his noisy speech—in his self-congratulatory speech—had thought proper to say, that the agriculturists had abstained from stating the reasons of their assent or dissent. Now, in answer to this taunt it was mainly that he rose. Undoubtedly, from peculiar circumstances, and from the high character of the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government, with the confidence which was reposed in him by the agriculturists, the Premier had in his hands the power of carrying any measure he pleased. The right hon. Member for Portsmouth had evidently wished to argue this question as though the late Ministers had never brought forward their measure against the "wheat-sheaf," and had never made that appeal to the country which had been answered by the return of that "silent" majority, of whom the right hon. ex-Chancellor tauntingly complained. But he knew that, whatever opinions might have been, or were entertained by the agriculturists, of the Government measure—whatever the effect upon their minds of the Premier's calculations and arguments—they entertained but one feeling of horror—or if not of horror, of contempt—for the proposition made by the late Government. Now, he for one objected to the hon. Member for Lincolnshire assuming to himself any peculiar character for friendship towards the agriculturists; and whether or not the hon. Member might feel himself fettered by inconvenient speeches, declarations, and pledges, there certainly appeared some reason for suspecting that to be the case: however, he, as a "silent" Member, forming part of what he might call an "audience," on whom, he must say, right hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House were in the habit of practising at no inconsiderable length, he had to congratulate the House and the country on the position in which the agricultural interests now stood, considering the very decisive majority against the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, "whom he thought he saw opposite," and to whom he had predicted on a former occasion the fate of his motion. On that occasion the benches were empty, there was no one in the gallery, and but two policemen in the lobby; and he told the hon. Member that, even should he take a show of hands among the cabmen in Palace-yard, it would be given against him. In conclusion he would only say that, placing great confidence in the character of the right hon. Baronet, and in that utter superiority which in the eyes of the country he possessed over the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell), and his colleagues on the other side of the House, he for one should say "content," not to the proposition of the hon. Member for Lincolnshire, but to that brought forward by her Majesty's Government.

Mr. *Horsman* said, that the hon. Member for Lincolnshire (Mr. Christopher), had come forward as the representative of a great agricultural constituency, and the opinions that he expressed, and the course he was about to pursue on that measure, derived greater importance from that circumstance. The hon. Gentleman had said, that the statements on the subject were so contradictory, that he was long unable to make up his mind upon it; but he was prepared to show, that none of them were so contradictory as those which the hon. Member had himself made; and he would prove it from the words of the hon. Member himself. It would be remembered, that the question of the Corn-laws was much agitated many months previous to the late election, and he thought it might be somewhat instructive to see what had been the course pursued by those Gentlemen who assumed to themselves the merit of paying exclusive attention to the interests of the farmers on that stage on which they had been such prominent actors. What he was prepared to prove was, that that hon. Gentleman had, within a recent period, pursued two distinct courses of conduct; the one, while the Whig Administration held office; the other, during the administration of his own friends; that he had made statements at one time, which he had contradicted at another; and that he had given positive pledges which he had openly broken. There were three points on which the hon. Gentleman had used strong statements. In the first place, the hon. Gentleman had invariably maintained the old law, not merely upon general principles, but had refused to accede to any alteration whatsoever. In the next place, the hon. Gentleman had pledged himself at the last election, that he would oppose any attempt to lower the protection of the agriculturist; and, in the third place, that he would withdraw his confidence from the right hon. Gentleman opposite, in the event of that right hon. Gentleman adopting a certain course of conduct which he had since adopted.

Now, with regard to the first point, the hon. Member had stated, that

> "A gentleman whom he was alluding to, had thought proper to represent him as having stated, that he was attached to the agricultural interest, and not the less so because he did not bind himself to the present Corn-laws, but that what he had said was, that he should not cease to adhere to the Corn-laws, because he knew of no measure so just to the agricultural interest, and that he should oppose every proposition for giving them less protection."

A few months afterwards, the hon. Gentleman saw things in a different light, and stated, that

> "By the present scale, (of the law he was so friendly to) the market was given up to foreign speculators, who derived from it a profit of 150 per cent, without the agriculturist deriving any benefit whatever."

And now the hon. Gentleman came forward, and objected to the scale of the right hon. Baronet, because it did not give sufficient protection, although he had himself proposed a scale which actually gave less protection than that of the right hon. Baronet. But having received strong remonstrances from agricultural associations and other quarters, the hon. Gentleman now came forward, and proposed a higher rate of duty, at the same time, however, taking care to propose it in such a manner that the question could not come before the House at all, nor could the sense of the House be taken upon it. So much for the consistency of the hon. Member, the friend of protection. [The hon. Member, amidst cries of "Question," quoted other passages from the speeches of the hon. Member for Lincolnshire (Mr. Christopher).] Gentlemen opposite might think that he was taking unnecessary trouble, but he wished to show that the hon. Gentleman had at one time held up the law as perfect in principle and in detail, and at another period, and that very recently, had said, that it was a law fraught with all possible inconvenience; and that he had made certain pledges which, whether he had kept or not, he should leave the House to determine. If the hon. Gentleman denied that he had given such pledges, he held his authorities in his hand, and was ready to give them.

Mr. *Bankes* said, that if any apology were requisite for his intrusion upon the attention of the House, the excuse must be found in the speech of the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had been pleased to call upon agricultural Members in a tone of defiance not easily resisted, challenging them to state how they redeemed the pledges they had given on the hustings. His answer to that taunt was, that he had fulfilled the pledge which he had given, that pledge having been to use every constitutional means of ejecting a Ministry which at that period had misgoverned the empire—a ministry which had proposed financial measures provoking the ridicule of every man of thought, of sense, or judgment, measures which no one could believe had been brought forward with any intention of carrying them, but solely with the unworthy view of embarrassing the Government succeeding. To eject that Government was the pledge he had given, and that pledge had been thoroughly redeemed. Now, as an "agricultural" Member (nor did he shrink from the appellation), this he would tell the right hon. Gentlemen opposite, that he, and those with whom he agreed, saw neither the advantage nor the propriety of rising, one after another, to repeat precisely the same opinions as each other, with a prolixity calculated to fatigue the House and disgust the country, and tending to lower the character of the House to that of a common debating society. For, though undoubtedly, to a certain extent, discussion was useful, yet an excessive superabundance of loquacity not only was useless and wearisome, but was productive of positive injury to the country by obstructing public business, and was doubly discreditable to those who practised it with the object of so obstructing business. Those who, with himself, thought with the hon. Member for Lincolnshire, were satisfied with that hon. Member's statement of their case—knowing that the statement of it by one hon. Gentleman must be as good as if it were repeated by several, and had not the folly and the vanity to intrude themselves on the time of the House with laboured loquaciousness and fatiguing reiterations. This was his answer, then, to the taunting reflections of the right hon. ex-Chancellor, nor should he probably have risen but with the view of giving this answer. But he trusted, then, that having occasion to rise, he might be excused if he added a few observations confirmatory of the views which, generally speaking, the agricultural Members took of the subject then under consideration. The county which he had the honour to represent was in some respects in a situation similar to that which had returned the hon. Member by whom the present motion was brought forward. The hon. Mover had stated that he represented a constituency wholly agricultural; in that point there was some difference between them. Dorsetshire, no doubt, was mainly an agricultural county; there were not in it any great number of large manufactories; but, nevertheless, he conceived himself to be as much the representative of the merchants, the traders, and even the petty dealers of that county, as he was the representative of those exclusively engaged in agriculture. Now. he took upon himself to say, that the merchants and the traders of Dorsetshire were on the whole favourable to the measure which had been proposed to Parliament by her Majesty's Government, and even if he adopted the views entertained by hon. Members opposite, that all the traders, merchants, and manufacturers were now represented in that House by the Gentlemen who sat on the Opposition side, yet they would derive but little comfort from any sacrifices which agriculturists might have to make, from any consolation which the so-called representatives of the trading interests were able to afford them. The House could not have forgotten the manner in which hon. Gentlemen opposite received the proposition of his right hon. Friend. They did their utmost to cast on it every possible ridicule; some called it "a mite," others "a mouse," and none abstained from bestowing on it every term of insignificance. But he ventured to assert that those hon. Members did not express the feelings of the trading classes throughout the United Kingdom. Among the traders, small and great, he did believe there prevailed a sentiment favourable to this important change. He did believe that it was not only more than they expected, but that they thought it as much as they could reasonably require. He had not, at the present moment, made up his mind as to whether benefit would be derived from this measure to one part of his constituents or to another, neither was he prepared to say, that what might be lost by one part of his constituents would be gained by another; but this he must take the liberty of observing, that some parts of the lands of Dorsetshire could not be made to grow corn without a greater degree of protection than was necessary for other parts of the country. One of the right hon. Baronets who held a seat in the Cabinet, who might be regarded as one of the leading representatives of the landed interest, and who had been returned to that House by one of the richest counties in England, might justly enough consider that the protection afforded by the measure of the Government was sufficient for the county which he represented; but that protection was hardly enough for Dorsetshire; he was, therefore, bound to consider how far he could safely go in supporting the proposition which had been brought forward by the Government. On the whole, he rather favoured the views of the hon. Member for Lincolnshire; but, before he sat down, he hoped he might be allowed to allude to some details which he thought were material to the proper consideration of the present question. He meant to allude to them but very shortly, with no wish to cavil; neither did he do it under the influence of any arrogant feeling that he could discover something which had escaped the examination of the Government and their assistants. He had perused some of the papers laid on the Table of the House with much attention, and he professed himself unable to arrive at the same conclusions which had been drawn from the data contained in those documents. It was well known to the House that Mr. Meek, in his report, had supplied the Government with a great deal of important information. At the end of his report Mr. Meek said that a general opinion prevailed on the continent, apparently a well founded one, that, whatever change took place in England that had the effect of giving an impulse to the agriculturists of the continent to raise, and to the merchant to export, the several articles required, it would at the same time have a powerful tendency to equalize the prices of those articles in both countries. To that he confessed that he could not subscribe. Then, under the head "Stettin," Mr. Meek said it was not probable that any material increase would, under the circumstances adverted to, take place in the articles usually exported from Stettin. At the 25th page of his report Mr. Meek stated, in reference to the railroad from Stettin to Berlin, that that mode of communication, when completed, would in all probability give a great increase to the trade of Stettin, as it would afford great facility for the conveyance to that place for exportation, and to the capital for consumption, of all produce raised in the country bordering on the line through which it passed, and connected, as it would be, by a steam navigation in contemplation, for opening an intercourse between Stettin, Dantzic, Königsberg, Stralsund, &c., it was impossible to say to what extent the country might be benefited, and its produce increased. From these advantages set forth by Mr. Meek, it was expected that great benefits would accrue to agriculture in those parts of Germany, and further benefits were expected to arise from the alteration of the Corn-laws in England, and from the improvement of soil not now in a state of cultivation. It was evident that the people of that part of Europe had hitherto wanted the means of conveyance, that they were now on the point of obtaining that, and by means of it they would be enabled to export their agricultural produce, and to obtain a supply of artificial manure for the improvement of their lands. He had read to the House some of the data on which Mr. Meek founded his conclusions, and he could by no means arrive at that conclusion from the facts set forth to which he had thus briefly and cursorily called the attention of the House. The realisation of the prospects described by Mr. Meek must produce a charge upon, and not a benefit to, agriculture. There could be no doubt that the railroads contemplated in the north of Europe would be speedily finished, for the English railroads were nearly completed, and the contractors by whom they had been executed could now direct their capital and experience to the continent for the purpose of producing similar results. Nothing else was wanted to render the power of rivalry on the continent complete, and to make it formidable. In conclusion, he wished to say that he had told the hon. Mover he should not vote for him, but yet, if he voted against him, he should be under the necessity of voting with Gentlemen opposite, and he should prefer any other course to that.

Lord *Worsley,* who was nearly inaudible in the gallery, was understood to express his surprise that his hon. Colleague was not better supported by the hon. Gentlemen on the Ministerial side. He thought the hon. Gentlemen opposite would have preferred a larger amount of protection than the plan of the right hon. Baronet would give. Their silence in reference to the proposition of his hon. Colleague surprised him, because he regarded the scale of his hon. Colleague preferable to that proposed by the right hon. Baronet, and on that ground he thought hon. Gentlemen opposite would have assisted his hon. Colleague in carrying his measure, and more especially because the right hon. Baronet had argued that 20*s.* was not a prohibitory duty, and said that Dantzic corn would be brought into this country paying that amount of duty. For these reasons he had expected the hon. Gentleman opposite would have supported his hon. Colleague's amendment. The motion of the noble Lord the Member for London having been rejected, he hoped the proposition of his hon. Colleague would be successful, because, so far as he was concerned, he meant to give the 20*s.* duty all the opposition in his power.

Mr. *Miles* said, he regretted that his hon. Friend, the Member for Lincolnshire had thought it to be his duty to submit his proposition before the House. He was inclined to support the proposition of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth on two grounds. In the first place, when low prices prevailed, it would give the British farmer a monopoly of the British market; and, in the second place, when corn rose to high prices, it would give a considerable benefit to the consumer by the graduated scale under which a foreign supply might be obtained. Such was the state of public opinion, that it was necessary to take the subject into consideration, and the question which the country had been called on to consider with reference to an alteration in the Corn-laws, was, whether they would take the measure of the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) or that of the right hon. Baronet, who was himself the consistent advocate of a fair protection for all the interests concerned, and was at the same time an advocate for a graduated scale? Had not the country already answered the question, as to which measure they preferred. All that the friends of the agricultural interest looked for was a fair protection for the British farmer, and those who would seek for more would, in his opinion, adopt a course which was calculated to ruin their cause. He did not conceive that the protection would be sufficient, if foreign corn were admitted at a low duty, when the price was between 50*s.* and 55*s.* It should be so arranged by the system under which the introduction of foreign corn would be permitted, that up to a certain price, say 60*s.*, the supply should float into the market gradually, and, after that, namely, at a higher price, that provision should be made for a larger supply, and those two desirable objects would, in his opinion, be effected by the plan of the right hon. Baronet. After hearing the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Portsmouth, and having himself bestowed considerable attention on the documents laid before the House, he was induced to coincide with that right hon. Gentleman and conclude, that no great quantity of corn could be imported much under 60*s.* In order to calculate the probable effects of the measure of the right hon. Baronet on the British farmer, it would be necessary to take the average prices at Dantzic or St. Petersburgh, and compare them with the prices in this country, and then adding the duty to the average price of the foreign corn, to ascertain if it could be brought into competition with the corn produced in this country at any period before the price in our market should reach 56*s.* No doubt some corn could be sent in from Denmark, and he could state from his own information that a Scotch gentleman who cultivated land in Denmark would be able to put corn free on board at the port of Lubeck at 30*s.* per quarter; the cost of transit from Lubeck to Hull would be about 3*s.* 5*d.*, and insurance and other charges about 1*s.* 6*d.*, so that if to this were added 16*s.* duty, it would be only 50*s.* 11*d.*, in case he sold the corn himself. That, however, was but one instance; and in his opinion, it was impossible that the generality of Danish corn could come into the market at less than from 53*s.* to 57*s.*, paying 16*s.* duty. Therefore, there was no great danger of the influence of those 250,000 quarters of corn from Denmark on the British farmer. He for that reason approved of the Government proposition, and on the whole he thought that if the agriculturists gave up something at the end of the scale, on the whole they would be gainers. With respect to the averages, he thought that they would be more fairly obtained under the proposed than under the existing plan. It appeared that, in the week ending the 10th of September, 1841, the duty was brought down to 1*s.*, that in London, Wakefield, Leeds, Hull, Liverpool, Newcastle and Derby, the quantity entered was 36,849 quarters, at an average price of 75*s.* 0½*d.* At the remaining 143 places, the quantity was 30,066 quarters, and the average price 67*s*, 3¼*d.* So that the difference between these markets was full 7*s.* 8¼*d.*. Indeed it appeared quite evident that there would be one great advantage in including in the averages, as the right hon. Baronet proposed, the country markets as well as the markets of London and the great manufacturing and commercial towns. He thought that was just also, for the average price of the whole country ought not to be assumed from the average price in a few towns. He felt convinced, therefore, that he was doing his duty to his constituents and the country, by at once adopting the alterations proposed by the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government; and it was his opinion that, notwithstanding the length to which the discussion had been carried, it had done a great deal of good, for the more the scale had been considered, the more its justice had been admitted; and although it might not meet the extreme views of persons of either party, yet the moderate portion of the agricultural, mercantile, and manufacturing classes approved of it, and looked on it as a great boon in reference to the increasing exigencies of the times, and the annually increasing amount of population. He felt it his duty to support the proposal of the right hon. Baronet, and he hoped the hon. Member for Lincolnshire, having stated his opinions to the House, would take the suggestion which he offered for the sake of unanimity, and not press his motion.

Mr. *Wallace* observed, that the hon. Member for East Somerset did not prove, though he had asserted, that the proposed measure of her Majesty's Government had done a great deal of good. In his belief, the majority of the people looked upon it as a delusion, nay, an imposition. He called it a delusion upon the ignorant, and an imposition upon those who were well informed. He was thoroughly convinced of the impolicy of the measure, and in favour of a total repeal of the Corn-laws; and, to further that object, he was much inclined to think that his best course would be to leave those hon. Gentlemen opposite to adopt those measures with which they thought fit to oppress the people. The people had a strong suspicion that there was something in this measure that would appear in its effects, though it was not detected in the abstract; and, therefore, he hoped the hon. Gentlemen who brought forward and supported the present amendment would vindicate their opinions in favour of higher rates of duty than those proposed by the right hon. Baronet. The hon. Mover of the amendment asked him if he would vote for it. He did not mean to do so; for, perhaps, the Chairman might make him a teller, and he was not to be caught by that sort of chaff. Throughout the length and breadth of the land, so far as he knew, there was one universal feeling of disgust and disapprobation of the sliding scale. From letters which he had received, he believed that it would do to consumers and to mercantile men and manufacturers no good at all. It was not denied that some small benefit might arise when the time came, but it was believed that the scale was made purposely, carefully, and most judiciously, in order that the better climates of England—the wheat-growing counties of England—should be well protected, because the greatest number of voters in that House were living on the land. They would find that true to the letter; if they went 100 miles north and south of London, they would see whether the scale of wheat did not suit their book uncommonly well. He might be wrong, and, of course, he was liable to be put to rights by public opinion, but not by the opinion of hon. Gentlemen on the opposite benches. He thought decidedly, however much it might be the custom of the country to send Gentlemen connected with the landed interest to that House, and he happened to be one of that class, that it was a dangerous principle for people to make laws for their own interest. He never forgot that he had a deep interest in the colonies while they were legislating for their colonies, and therefore he never uttered a word against the measures before the House, although he had great interests at stake, and had suffered severely by the passing of those measures. Humanity on the one hand, and a desire to promote good government on the other, made him not only acquiesce but vote in favour of measures which were against his own interest. He thought himself entitled to say, therefore, to hon. Gentlemen on the opposite benches, that if they were not like Cæsar's wife [*A laugh*], ay, he said, like Cæsar's wife, above reproach, he called upon them to look to the state of the country; and he would tell them that they had been deluded if they believed that the working men of this country thought otherwise than that this measure, whether intentionally or no, was calculated to destroy their best interests. He had not been prepared to hear that the Bank of England was about to reduce the rate of interest from 5 to 4 per cent. That was another gleam of prosperity; and he would tell his famishing countrymen at Paisley and elsewhere, that the time was arriving when the screw must be put on, and there would be other gleams of prosperity in the shape of additional embarrassments and bankruptcies. Let the hon. Gentlemen who were talking below the Bar come up and talk to the House, that he might see who they were, and hear what they said. He believed the bill would do no good; but he would ask the right hon. Baronet, who had read a letter stating the rapidity with which corn could be brought from America by post—by mail-packet, and that was by post—which letter, if it meant anything, meant that a free-trade in corn could be established between this country and America; he called upon the right hon. Baronet to verify that letter by establishing that free-trade. He understood that some emigrants from Scotland to America had sent a gift of flour and pork to the starving people of Paisley, but he was doubtful whether they could get the present unless the duty upon it was first paid. The hon. Member concluded by stating that he was opposed to all duty upon corn and provisions. In that acceptation of the term he was a repealer.

Mr. *Fleming* entirely approved of the proposition brought forward by the right hon. Baronet, and should give it his most cordial support. He might add that, in doing so, he should be acting in accordance with the wishes of his constituents, with whom he had thought it his duty to communicate on the subject; and although that communication had been made a fortnight back, not one of them had intimated disapproval of the course he proposed to take. He regretted that the present motion had been brought forward, inasmuch as it was calculated to disturb that unanimity which he had hoped to see prevail on the Ministerial side of the House on so important a subject. He trusted, however, that the hon. Member for Lincolnshire would adopt the suggestion which had been made to him by his hon. Friend the member for Somersetshire, and withdraw his motion.

Mr. *Charles Wood* was exceedingly sorry that the right hon. Gentleman the Vice-President of the Board of Trade was not in the House during the speech of the hon. Member for North Somersetshire, (Mr. Miles), a Gentleman whose attention to all subjects connected with agricultural interests entitled his views upon a question of this nature to particular consideration. If the right hon. Gentleman had heard what fell from that hon. Member, he would no longer persist in calling the position laid down by the right hon. Member for Portsmouth (Mr. Baring) with respect to the probable operation of the new mode of taking the averages, a great "arithmetical absurdity." The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Gladstone) treated it as utterly beyond the bounds of possibility, that a difference of 7*s.* a quarter should exist in the average prices of different towns in the country. But if the right hon. Gentleman had been in the House when the hon. Member for North Somersetshire (Mr. Miles) spoke, he would have heard that that which he treated as an utter impossibility had actually been the fact within the last year. The hon. Member for North Somersetshire stated, that in the month of September, 1841, there was a difference in the average price of the seven largest towns in the kingdom, as compared with the 143 small towns, of no less than 7*s.* in one week. Such had been the actual difference under the operation of the existing law; and he maintained, that under the law which it was now proposed to enact the variation of the averages between the large and the small towns, if not materially increased, would certainly in no respect be diminished. He was satisfied that the effect of the new regulations would be to reduce the general average, and consequently to keep up the duty. He was the last person to suppose that the right hon. Baronet opposite had brought forward his plan of taking the averages with the view of increasing the duty; but he trusted, should the new mode be found to have the effect of reducing the price, and raising the duty, that the right hon. Baronet would make a reduction in the scale equivalent to the increased duty. He wished to allude to another point, which he thought had not been thoroughly understood by the House when the right hon. Baronet introduced this question; he alluded to the proposed duty on wheat imported into Canada from the United States. He understood the right hon. Baronet to say, that if the duty which he proposed to impose on the importation of Canadian wheat into this country was assented to by the House, that he would be prepared to give up the duty of 3*s.* which he proposed to place on the importation of wheat into Canada from the United States. He wished to know if this was the intention of Government? In regard to the plan of the Government, he conceived the great point in discussion was the effect which the duty would have on the price of corn in this country, and he confessed that he did not quite understand the advantage of the first level of the scale proposed. The right hon. Baronet heard the hon. Member for Somersetshire state—and in doing so he agreed with that side of the House, and not with the Government—that he considered the protection proposed by Government efficient up to 60*s.* at the least. It did appear to him, judging from the papers laid on the Table of the House, that no material effect would be produced by the measure of the Government, till the price of corn reached 60*s.* or 62*s.* and, although hon. Gentlemen opposite had formed a different opinion, he confessed he could not understand how they could entertain such an opinion if they took their information from the documents which had been produced by the Government in support of its own measure. The statement of the right hon. Baronet in no degree affected the accuracy of the general position, that so considerable a quantity of corn could be imported into this country under the proposed scale. The right hon. Gentleman laid great stress on the words any quantity, but he did not think that the importations under the new system would be found to have any effect on the home market. He thought it would be better to argue this question, taking for their data the prices of foreign corn laid down in this country, because this would relieve them from the consideration of freight, insurance, and the other charges incidental to its importation. It was perfectly true, as the right hon. Baronet had stated, that it was impossible to fix the price of corn, in this or any other country, by means of legislation, because an abundant harvest would always lower the price. But it was not true to assert that it was impossible, by means of legislation, to fix a maximum duty, because, so long as there was a possibility of obtaining corn from abroad, the price could be kept within that maximum. And the chief object of a Corn-law ought to be, to fix a maximum prrice, beyond which, the price could not rise. He had not the advantage of hearing the right hon. Baronet introduce this question to the House, but having read his speech in the newspapers, he understood that the right hon. Baronet's intention was to keep the prices of wheat as an average of 56*s.* a quarter; the whole debate had proceeded on this assumption, and he was, therefore, astonished to hear the right hon. Gentleman the Vice-President of the Board of Trade declare, that such an assertion had never escaped the lips of the right hon. Baronet. If the right hon. Baronet had not made such an assertion, he would like to know what they had all along been debating about. If 56*s.* then, be a price at which it was proposed to keep the price in this country, so far as legislation could effect it in this country, it was essential to know the price at which foreign corn could be laid down in this country, because this would determine the question of competition. Now, from all the information which he could gather on this point, he found that 45*s.* per quarter was the price at which foeign corn could be sent to this country. He defied hon. Gentlemen opposite to show that it could be brought at a lower price. That was the average price according to the consular returns; it was the average price according to the statement of Mr. Meek, it was the probable price for Dantzic the great source of our supply and all statements coincided in fixing the price at 45*s.* He would read to the House a statement showing the price paid to the holder of foreign corn actually sold in England. In 1839, 134,300 quarters paid a duty of 20*s.* 8*d.*, the average price for the week in which they were entered was 67*s.* 1*d.*, and deducting the duty 20*s.* 8*d.*, there remained the price paid to the importer 46*s.* 5*d.* In 1830, 127,000 quarters paid a duty of 20*s.* 8*d.*; the average price throughout England was 65*s.* 4*d.*, and deducting the duty, 20*s.* 8*d.*, there remained to the importer 44*s.* 8*d.* In 1831, 7,000 quarters paid a duty of 20*s.* 8*d.*; the price in this country was 65*s.* and upwards, and deducting the duty, the price remaining to the importer was about 45*s.* In August, 1832, 150,000 quarters paid a duty of 23*s.* 8*d.*; the price of the week was 63*s.* 2*d.*, and deducting the duty, the price remaining to the importerwas about 40*s.*; but this was just before harvest, and the duty rose from this time to 30*s.* within one month. In September, 1839, 170,000 quarters paid a duty of 28*s.* 8*d.*; the price in this country was 56*s.* 6*d.*, and deducting the duty, there remained to the importer 27*s.* 10*d.*; but the importation of this year had been warehoused and held over until the importers could no longer hold it, and it was admitted just before harvest, when the duty was sure to rise. In 1839, 100,000 quarters paid a duty of 10*s.* 8*d.*; the price in this country was 67*s.* 2*d.*, and deducting the duty, the price remaining to the importer was 56*s.* 6*d.* In 1840, 340,000 quarters paid a duty of 13*s.* 8*d.*; the average price in this country was 68*s.* 7*d.*, and deducting the duty, there remained to the importer the price of 55*s.* per quarter. This, he thought, was the best proof of the price at which the foreign holder could import corn into this country, and he thought it evident, that if he could not get a price of the same amount, that it would not be worth his while to import any corn at all. That point being established, taking the price at 45*s.*, and adding to it the duty of 16*s.*, the price of foreign corn would be 61*s.* per quarter; and it would not be until the price of home-grown corn in the English market reached to 59*s.* or 60*s.* that foreign corn would come into practical competition with it. The position, then, of the hon. Member for Somersetshire was clearly made out, that up to 60*s.* a quarter an almost prohibitive protection was given to the English agriculturist. His right hon. Friend (Mr. Baring) had stated to the House that the average price of wheat in Jersey, for a period of thirteen years, under a free-trade, was 51*s.* 5*d.* From papers laid before the House by the right hon. Gentleman, the Vice-President of the Board of Trade, stating the average price each year, and the average duty paid, it appeared that there was no importation (except in 1832, under the circumstances stated, and in 1837) when the duty was above 10*s.* In 1833, a fair year, the average price in the home market was 52*s.* 11*d.* The average duty was 11*s.* 1*d.*, and the price to the seller was, therefore, 41*s.* 10*d.*, but only 1,144 quarters were imported, showing that 41*s.* 10*d.* was a price at which the foreign importer could not afford to sell. He apprehended, therefore, that at any duty above 12*s.* no great quantity of foreign corn would be brought into this country. It appeared from the consular returns, and from the statement of Mr. Meek, that about two millions of quarters was the utmost they could export from the continent, and for some ten or twelve years it was probable that that quantity would not be increased. If this was the case, it was absurd to suppose that a quantity of corn such as this could materially affect the price of corn in this country, and the agriculturists would not be injured in the smallest degree by the measure of the Government, if it protected them, as they believed, until corn reached 60*s.* a quarter. He had discussed this subject, grounding his statements on the papers laid before the House, and though he knew that his statements might appear very dull to the House, yet in treating of the operation of the sliding scale, he could only show its effects by dealing with it as a matter of figures. There was no difficulty in making exciting speeches on a subject like the present, but he agreed with the hon. Member for Dorsetshire that the character of the House was compromised by hon. Members making such speeches, and he had therefore avoided all exciting topics. He did not believe that the measure of the Government would benefit the consumer, and he should feel glad if it should turn out that he was mistaken, and if the consumer derived a benefit which he did not anticipate. He had other observations to offer to the House, but, as he knew the subject was a dull and tiresome one, he would not trespass longer on their patience.

Mr. *W. E. Gladstone* rose to explain. The hon. Member for Dorchester (Mr. Banks) seemed to say that he had thrown overboard Mr. Meek. This was not correct. What he said was, that there were certain points upon which he did not think Mr. Meek was quite accurate, but upon the whole he believed that that Gentleman's statements bore the character of general correctness. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Halifax (Mr. Wood) had made some observations as to the great difference of prices that occurred in several of the new towns, a difference amounting to as much as 5*s.* a quarter; if so, there must have been an addition of price to the amount of 17*s.* more than in the old towns. It was supposed that he had said, that in three particular towns there was no less than 7*s.* difference in the price in one week, but what he meant to say was, that the excess of price in the great markets did not amount to more than 6*s.* or 7*s.* in other markets.

Mr. *Labouchere* wished to ask the right hon. Gentleman what was his intention with respect to the duty to be imposed on corn and flour which came from America. He understood the right hon. Gentleman to have said, that if the resolution should be carried, as it at present stood, the duty would remain much as it was now. Now, it was known that it was illegal to import American flour through Canada.

Mr. *Gladstone* said, as soon as the House had agreed to the resolution of the right hon. Baronet, he would explain the course to be taken. It was not intended to levy any additional duty on wheat imported from America into Canada; and with respect to flour, which was at present absolutely prohibited, the importation being taxed, and contrary to law, it was intended to admit it into Canada on the same terms on which it was admitted into the other colonies.

Mr. *Thomas Duncombe* assured the House that he should not have troubled them with making any observations on this occasion, notwithstanding he had suffered former debates to pass without speaking, nor would he have interposed to prevent this contemptible farce being brought to a close, if he had not thought that it was due to the very large constituency he represented, to state their views upon the subject. The hon. Member for Lincolnshire (Mr. Christopher) in his simplicity as a country gentleman, had called this motion of his an amendment. But from the opinion which he (Mr. Duncombe) was able to form of it, both from what he had heard in that House, and from what he had read in the public prints, it was nothing of the kind. The hon. Gentleman had made a speech to his constituents, in Lincolnshire, during the recess, which had attracted considerable attention, and had been the subject of much comment. Indeed, the hon. Gentleman had been designated "the pilot balloon" of the Government, in consequence of that speech. The hon. Gentleman had denied being used by the right hon. Baronet as anything of that sort, or as having been in any way consulted by the Government before the plan was proposed to the House itself. "Pilot balloons" were not a novelty. They had been used by very great men in former times. Moliere kept an old woman, and to this old woman (his housekeeper) he always read his comedies, and found that he could form a tolerably accurate notion of the impression they would make on the public mind by the effect they produced on the old woman. A reverend and witty prelate —Mr. Sidney Smith—had given as his advice to Lord John Russell, that every great man ought to keep a "foolometer." Now, he would not say that the hon. Member for Lincolnshire was the right hon. Baronet's "foolometer." The hon. Gentleman himself had denied being so, and, on his own authority, therefore, he was bound not to consider him as such, but still, though the hon. Gentleman might not be a "foolometer," he might have a little balloon of his own, which he had inflated himself, which had gone up, and was now in the agonies of its descent, but when and where it would come down it was impossible to say. But the people should not be deluded, he (Mr. D.) would take care that the vote to-night should show whether this was a delusion or not. The first step of the hon. Member for Lincolnshire should have been to have rejected the measure proposed by the right hon. Baronet. If the agriculturists were what they declared themselves to be, they could not, and he (Mr. Duncombe) could answer for it that the manufacturing and commercial interests would not, be deceived by this motion of moonshine. If the report of the hon. Gentleman's speech to his constituents last year was correct, it was impossible to believe that he came here to-night and made such a humbugging speech as he had addressed to the House [*"Order, order"*.] It was very well for hon. Members to call him to order, but they would themselves be soon called to order by their constituents. The hon. Member then read an extract from the speech of Mr. Christopher, in which that hon. Gentleman said:—

"He would adhere to the present law, and he would do so because he had never heard of any measure so just to the agricultural interest. But, if any measure could be proposed to give greater protection than at present, then he would support it, but he would oppose any proposition that gave less protection than what the agricultural interest now enjoyed. Sir George Murray had been spoken of as likely to form one of Sir Robert Peel's Government. He looked upon Sir George Murray as one of the most trimming and shuffling of politicians. If Sir Robert Peel intended admitting him or his brother-in law, Mr. George Robert Dawson, into the administration, he would have no confidence in such a Government. He had never said one thing in one place and departed from it in another. Nor would he desert the party which maintained a system of protection, but would support them so long as they preserved a straightforward course, and adhered strictly to their principles. He was the same as he ever had been, ever since he had been a Member of Parliament. His noble Friend (Lord Worsley) seemed too much shackelled and controlled by the influence of party feeling in favour of the present Government to allow him to act independently. He showed these feelings to an extent that overpowered his deliberate judgment. He would never sacrifice his own feelings to support a party."

Now, if his ears did not very much deceive him the other evening, he heard the hon. Gentleman say, in answer to his noble Friend, that he would propose his 25*s*. duty to the House. But he also said, that if it came to this, that carrying such a measure would throw out the present Government, he had so much confidence in the Government of Sir Robert Peel, and had such a dislike to the Whigs, that the course he should take would be to prefer the least of two evils, and he should take the motion and proposition of the right hon. Baronet. And yet the hon. Member claimed credit for independence of feeling, and he accused his noble colleague of being too much addicted and too much attached to the party to which he belonged. The right hon. Baronet, the other evening, was praised by hon. Gentlemen on the opposition side of the House for his eminent talents and great ability; but it seemed to him, that the right hon. Baronet was praised at the expense of his political integrity. He would not pay the right hon. Baronet so bad a compliment. He believed, that the right hon. Baronet was honest and sincere in the motion he had introduced to the House, and in the propositions he had laid on the Table for the approbation of the House. It was said, that the right hon. Baronet had been held back, that there was a drag behind him, and that he could not do so much in advance of his own opinions as his excellent good sense inclined him to do. He did not believe a word of it. He believed that the hon. Baronet had introduced a measure which he thought was for the benefit of the country. He differed from the right hon. Baronet. He thought it was a perfectly delusive and illusory measure. In 1834, when the right hon. Baronet accepted office, the right hon. Baronet said, and he believed it would equally apply throughout the right hon. Baronet's whole political life, that he would never accept office to be an apostate from his former principles. The right hon. Baronet was not now an apostate from his former principles; he had always advocated a sliding scale, and a sliding scale he had now given to them, but in another form. He was not in the slightest degree disappointed in the measure proposed by Government. He never expected any thing from the Government concurring as he did in the sentiments expressed of it by the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Home Department (Sir James Graham) in 1834, when he said, that it was a Government composed of men who had spent their whole lives in proposing bad measures and in obstructing good. He did not know whether those were the the precise terms, but that was the spirit of his observation. The Government which now ruled the country was exactly of that description. How the right hon. Baronet, the Member for Dorchester (Sir James Graham) could reconcile those sentiments with his approbation of the measures of the present Government, or even with his sitting in the same Cabinet with them, it was not for him to say; but he could not help declaring that a more contemptible measure, or one less adequate to meet the exigencies of the times, never was introduced. They had heard of a man who held a farthing candle to the sun, that man was a great statesman, and he ought to have a seat in the present Cabinet. It was a great misfortune that the country could not be benefited by the services of such a man; and next to him, he must for one affirm that the hon. Member for North Lincolnshire ought to be taken into the Cabinet. There had been two or three points raised, during this debate, on the opposition side of the House, which had never been answered. One was the point of disparagement in which America would be placed by the sliding scale. The right hon. Baronet, the other evening, said that those who raised that point knew nothing at all about the matter, and that America was not quite so far off as they thought. The gallant Commodore (Sir C. Napier) had given notice of a motion, for the purpose of showing that America was as far off; but the right hon. Baronet had said that within six weeks flour might be got from New York; that an order might be sent out by a steamer, and that it would be back again within six weeks; but was that commerce? Was that free-trade? Was that the footing upon which the American corn-dealers wished it to be placed? Was it by an order being sent out from this country? No. What the American merchant wanted was a certain market, that whenever he thought proper to bring corn here, the produce of his own soil, he wished his ship to go back filled with British manufactures. One answer had been given to the Americans on this point—with regard to the disadvantageous position in which they were placed—a bill was on the Table in which it was for the first time proposed to impose a duty of 3*s.* a quarter upon wheat that crossed the St. Lawrence. The hon. Member for Liverpool last night said, that a special mission had been sent to the United States—that the Government deserved the greatest credit as they had sent out "a courageous nobleman" to that country to settle all differences. That nobleman was no doubt a very amiable individual in private life, but that he was a courageous nobleman he never heard before. All he recollected of that noble person when a Member of this House was, that he was a person of the greatest indecision of character and infirmity of purpose, and that it was totally impossible, after he had addressed the House, to know on which side he would vote. ["*Question.*"] That was the question; it was the question, at least, last night, and he would make it the question now. That noble Lord was always opposed to the popular interests. During the time of the Reform Bill, that noble Lord entertained the greatest distrust of the popular intellect. They had confidence in that noble Lord's special mission, but it seemed they did not want to hear who that noble Lord was, or the character of that noble Lord; but, such was his character, and the Americans knew it. This, however, he would tell them, that notwithstanding he might be a courageous nobleman — notwithstanding compliments might be paid to him by the hon. Member for Liverpool, that noble Lord did not carry with him the confidence of the people of this country, and that he would not bring back the reconciliation of America. No, if the right hon. Baronet would hold out to the Americans the hand of free trade, if he would only open the British ports to the commercial enterprise of America, a union might be cemented between the two countries, such as would leave no boundary to dispute, no fortifications to raise or jealousies to allay. No; if they would hold out the hand of free-trade to America, they might cement a union that would redound to their own honour, and be promotive of the best interests of the two greatest commercial nations in the world. If fourteen nights had already been consumed, they had been consumed in asserting a principle which would be acceptable to the great body of the people; but the debate of last night was worth all the rest. Two speeches had then been delivered which would open the eyes of the inhabitants of the three kingdoms. One of these was the speech of the hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Cobden), who saw, and felt, that in this House he might as well talk to the walls or the winds; but out of doors he knew that what he said would be well weighed, and could not fail to produce a powerful effect. It was a speech of powerful arguments and incontrovertible facts, and it would make a deep impression on the starving millions. The other speech of the night was that of the hon. Member for Knaresborough (Mr. Ferrand), which was received by the Tory or Conservative party (they rejoiced in both names, and they might accept which they pleased), and by the Ministers on the Treasury Bench with positive exultation. That, too, would open the eyes of the people, and especially of the great manufacturing interests of the country. The mode in which it was greeted on the other side of the House showed clearly that the great Ministerial majority had declared open war with the manufacturers [*"No, no"*]. It was too late now to say "No, no," after the manner in which the speech had been welcomed with "Yes, yes" last night. The grosser the insult, the louder were your cheers, the fouler the calumny, the more rapturous your applause [*"Order"*]. The intensity of Ministerial exultation was regulated only by the malignity of the libel [*"Order"*]. It was very well to cry "order" now, but little order had been observed last night, while the hon. Member for Knaresborough was speaking. Was it objected that he spoke of Ministerial exultation? Did he not see the right hon. Secretary for the Home Department sit and chuckle? Did he not see the right hon. Paymaster of the Forces shake his portly sides with delight? This occurred while the hon. Member for Knaresborough was reading to the House the most violent and malignant communications. Anonymous, too. Depend upon it, this must produce its effect—it could not last much longer. The Ministerial side professed the most kindly sympathy for the distresses of the working classes; but how did they show it? At the conclusion of the last Parliament he had taken the liberty to state the sufferings of a certain portion of the people, and he had been told that his representations were exaggerated. Had they not since been more than confirmed by the hon. Member for Leeds and others? He would now tell the House that the manufacturers wanted something more than pity—something more than lip-relief. They had waited four or five months in order to see how Ministers would deal with their misfortunes, whether they had the ingenuity to untie or the courage to cut asunder the Gordian knot, which the aristocracy had fastened, not only on the commerce and industry of the country, but upon the meanest comforts of the poor. And this House, as well as her Majesty's Ministers, may depend upon it, that the day was not far distant when they would lament the folly and rue the hour which had induced them in the plenitude of their power, and in the days of comparative peace, to regard with so little favour the motion of his hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton.

Mr. *A. Stafford O'Brien* had been referred to the other evening by an hon. Member opposite respecting something he had said on the hustings. He would therefore observe, that there was great difficulty in recollecting in the House, months after the delivery of such speeches, which hon. Members might have said on such an occasion. He could not call to mind exactly what he had said, but perhaps those who were in more frequen habits of public speaking, who could weigh their sentences and place their words with the precision of a legal instrument, might be more successful in this respect. When he addressed his constituents, he addressed to honest men, what was honestly felt and honestly intended. He did not proceed upon the plan of saying as much and meaning as little as possible. The noble Member for Tiverton (Lord Palmerston) had accused the landed interest of having received the proposition of the right hon. Baronet with ominous silence. He did not cheer because he was afraid of committing the great mistake of cheering too soon. He had since taken the opportunity of consulting his constituents, and after considering the plan and the present situation of the country, they had authorised him to support it. He hoped, therefore, to see it carried by such a majority as would produce an impression on the country. The friends of the present Government had been taunted with their differences and want of concord. It had been said, that "confusion worse confounded" reigned among them; but when the number, wealth, and power of the landed interest were taken into account, their moderation and concession ought to be the more highly valued. If the landed interest were called monopolists, he admitted the justice of the charge in one respect—they certainly had a monopoly of reason and moderation. They had come forward to settle the disputed point, and how far, he would ask, had their adversaries advanced to meet them in this endeavour? On the contrary, the opponents of Ministers had done all in their power to obstruct and impede. While he, for one, conceded this compromise, he did not pledge himself to resist any farther modification, should it be thought conducive to the welfare of the country; but he thought that even some Members of the Anti-Corn-Law League, knowing the difficulties of the Government in grappling with this great question, would recognise this plan as a fair experiment, and give a deliberate verdict in its favour.

Mr. *Christopher* rose to reply, and said he should have been perfectly satisfied to have concluded this debate without making a single further observation, but for the remarks which had fallen from the hon. Member for Finsbury (Mr. T. Duncombe). He could not compliment that hon. Gentleman either on the style, or the uncourteous manner in which he had been pleased, on almost every occasion when he had addressed the House, to represent the motives of those hon. Members who differed from him; but he trusted, that the committee would excuse him for a few minutes, while he justified his conduct in the presence of the hon. Member for Finsbury. The hon. Member had been pleased to quote certain remarks which had been imputed to him, on the authority of those persons who were politically opposed to him, and which were never submitted to him before they were published in the Poll-book without his sanction. Now, he not only did not utter them, but he said fearlessly, that they were sentiments which he had neither imagined, nor conceived. The hon. Member for Cockermouth, in less offensive terms than the hon. Member for Finsbury, had been pleased to taunt him with having now come forward to advocate sentiments which, six months ago, he would not have ventured to utter. But were times and circumstances not changed since this question had been under the discussion of the House, and since the time when the noble Lord, the Member for the City of London, was the organ of the Government? Was it a matter of no consideration to the agricultural interest, that at that time there were two parties sitting behind the Treasury bench, one in favour of what they called a moderate, but what he should call a low duty, on the importation of foreign corn; and the other, a numerous party, desirous to withdraw all protection from the agricultural interest. What, then, was the course left to all those gentlemen who were anxious to maintain that interest, but to come to a conclusion, that it would be impolitic to make any alteration in the Corn-laws. But since that period, a very material alteration had taken place; still if it were in his power, by his single vote, to maintain the existing Corn-laws, he would do so, rather than adopt the legislation now proposed to be given. But, as he had stated before, this and the other House of Parliament had declared their unanimous intention to revise and consider these laws; and both Houses of Parliament having come to that determination, he thought he was discharging his duty to those whom he represented to bring this subject fairly under their consideration. Acting consistently with the agricultural interest in coming forward, to the best of his ability, to act in accordance with the revised decision of Parliament, and endeavour, if possible, to come to some determination, which, even by the alteration of the Corn-laws, should retain to the agricultural interest of this country that protection which, under the present circumstances, they were entitled to receive. He trusted, that that would be a sufficient answer to the observations which had been made by the hon. Member for Finsbury, and the hon. Member for Cockermouth. And if he had been inclined when he came to that House, or if it were in his power now to take the opinion of the committee, aye or no, upon his resolution, he had no hesitation in saying, that he and his Friends would not vote in favour of the proposition of Government. But when he observed the crowded benches on the opposite side of the House, and saw that the tactics of that party was not to affirm his proposition of a maximum duty of 25*s.* upon the importation of foreign corn, but to embrace the proposition of the Administration, and ultimately to render it more in the power of Parliament, to reject his proposition, he had no hesitation in saying that, considering the manner in which the hon. Gentleman, the Member for Essex, and other hon. Gentlemen had spoken in that House, he should not be found, in spite of the taunts of the hon. Member for Finsbury, and let the consequences be what they might, going out of the House with him, and thus practically supporting his opinions. This, further, he would say, that if any Member of that House who was conversant with its forms, would put him in the way, either now or upon some future occasion, of bringing the subject under the consideration of Parliament, so that they could have the expressed opinion of the friends of the agricultural interest declared either in favour or against his proposition, then, although he should not have the honour of voting with the hon. Member for Finsbury in his opposition to protection being afforded to agriculture, still he should have the pleasure of knowing that he had discharged his duty to the House and to the country. He felt, that he had now discharged that duty, because it was impossible for him to have taken any other course than that he had taken. It would have been impossible for him, at any future stage of the proceedings, to have started his objection to the measure of the Government with as much effect, or on the third reading of the bill to have made any such alteration as he had now suggested. But he could assure the committee that if, at any future time, this subject could be brought forward in a substantive form, so that the question might be put aye or no to the House the measure he proposed this evening should have his support. He had found it necessary to make those observations in reply to the hon. Member for Finsbury, and having done so, he should not favour him, in spite of his reproaches and reflections, by going out of the House with him, an advocate for his doctrines.

Mr. *T. Duncombe:* I asked no favour of the hon. Member, and do not want him to go out with me, either into the lobby or any where else. I only asked him to be consistent with himself, and that he might be so, I read to him an extract from one of his own speeches [*"Spoke,"* and *"order."*]. I have a right to speak again in committee; a right to apologise to the hon. Member if I think fit, and a right to do him justice. He shall find that I will do him ample justice. I said, that I looked upon this motion as mere moonshine, and has not all that has been since said confirmed that opinion. If I wanted additional confirmation I should not go to this side of the House, but to the other. I hold in my hand a report of a speech made by an hon. and gallant friend of mine (Captain Hamilton) at Aylesbury, the day before yesterday, and here I find it distinctly stated, that the resolution of the hon. Member for North Lincolnshire was never meant to be a *bonâ fide* motion: all it was intended to do was to gull the farmers and agriculturists. The Duke of Buckingham was in the chair at the meeting where the speech was delivered, and his Grace also delivered his opinions. My hon. and gallant Friend said—

"Now, in order that Mr. Christopher's amendment should be carried it must first be put to the House of Commons, which he believed it would never be, because, before it could be first put Sir R. Peel's proposition must be negatived, Mr. Christopher proposing a higher amount of duty than Sir R. Peel. The House must, therefore, entertain the lower duty first, and it would therefore, be manifest to all who now heard him, that Mr. Christopher could not put his scheme as an amendment, but only as a substitute for the motion of Sir R. Peel. He thought he might assume, that so far as the plan of Mr. Christopher went —a plan which he was free to confess, he, in common with Mr. Rolfe, who had spoken at the preliminary meeting this morning, preferred to that of Sir R. Peel, still it was so brought forward that the Conservative Members could not make a stand upon it, unless they first disposed of the proposition which had been advanced by the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government. He therefore did not see his way in proposing or suggesting any increasing scale of protection which would not meet the same fate as that which awaited the scheme of Mr. Christopher."

The hon. Member for Aylesbury then referred to a speech made out of the House by the hon. Member for North Lincolnshire [*"Read"*]. What, all of it? The hon. Member expressed his regret, that Mr. Christopher had made a speech at all, and said:—

"Personally he did not know that hon. Gentleman, but he blamed him exceedingly for the part he had taken in the month of December last. Though he had no doubt that hon. Gentleman had been actuated by the best motives, he (Captain Hamilton) could not but think he had made a great mistake in submitting his scheme or plan to his constituents at Brigg, in Lincolnshire, where the pilot baloon went up before that of the Government had been promulgated and developed. He repeated, that he could not but regret, that this had been done, and he could not but suspect that other considerations apart from the wish or desire to advance the scale had induced the hon. Member to take that step."

Now, Sir, nothing that fell from me in this House is half so severe as this which fell from my hon. and gallant Friend. Then my hon. and gallant Friend described the sort of scene which had taken place in this House after the delivery of his own speech.

"When he (Captain Hamilton) had concluded his speech in the House of Commons, he was surrounded—nay, he might say mobbed—below the Bar by a number of county Members, who exclaimed, 'You have admitted too great a reduction.' His reply had been, 'I am not voting against my constituents, I am endeavouring to vote for them; nor am I going to make out too good a case for the manufacturers.'"

His hon. and gallant Friend was right, he was voting for his constituents. He was quite right in saying, that the protection of the right hon. Baronet is much higher than he states it, and that it will be equivalent to a protection of 25*s.* And my gallant Friend added,

"In the House of Commons he (Captain Hamilton) could only vote for or against the measure as placed before him; and with all regard and respect for the good opinions of his constituents, he could not vote for any amendment which did not come under his notice as a *bonâ fide* transaction."

Next came another hon. Member of this House (Mr. R. Clayton), who said he would vote against the hon. Member for Lincolnshire, because he

"Had arrived at the conclusion that the scale proposed by the Government afforded protection beyond the sum of 56*s.*"

Then I come to the noble Duke in the chair at the Aylesbury meeting (the Duke of Buckingham) [" *Question* and *divide.*"] What not hear *the farmer's friend?* Are there no individuals in this House who owe their seats to the Duke of Buckingham? And are all those individuals, when I am about to quote the independent and honest sentiments of the noble Duke, not prepared to hear them? The noble Duke told them—

"The Corn-laws were to be altered, and they were called upon to give up one-half of their protection, while they were told that those who advocated that change could not satisfy their opponents. Well, then, what was the use of it?"

That is what we want to know. What is the use of it? The right hon. Baronet knows that it does not satisfy us, nor does it satisfy the hon. Gentleman opposite; nobody hopes to get any advantage from the change. The noble Duke went on to say—

"If it were a motion for the repeal of the Corn-laws, he could understand it; but he was asked, and they were asked, to make such an alteration as would not satisfy their opponents, while it must dissatisfy their friends. That was the state of things; and, looking to the question in that point of view, and considering the burdens upon the land, and the exigencies to which they had been driven in former days, when wheat was 5*l.* or 6*l.* a load, he asked whether it was now right and proper to call upon the farmers of this country to make such a sacrifice as that demanded, for no other purpose, that he could discover, except to make a new Corn-law bill."

The noble Duke says also,—

"The present bill would not set the Corn-law question at rest. From what he had seen, he knew that the activity of their opponents would be great; year after year they would continue to knock at the doors of the agriculturists, demanding further concessions."

And that has been said, not only by the Duke of Buckingham, but by the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Home Department. This alteration will satisfy no one, and we shall have this work to do over again, year after year, till we obtain further concessions. The hon. Member (Mr. Christopher) has stated that he never uttered one of the sentiments attributed to him in the books from which I have read extracts, if that be so, I can only say it is most unfortunate for the hon. Gentleman, most unfortunate for the public, and most unfortunate for the House, that the hon. Gentleman had not sooner notified, through the public prints, that this was not his speech; for I understand it was copied from one of the Tory papers of Lincolnshire. The hon. Gentleman must, therefore, have seen it, and why he has not corrected this speech, or said that he did not make it, I cannot conceive. It appears, that I am not to have the honour of walking into the same lobby with the hon. Member. I must forego that pleasure, but against the proposition of the right hon. Baronet I must divide. Last night I voted against the imposition of any duty, and to be consistent, I and all other hon. Members who so voted, must vote against a 20*s.*

duty, and in giving that vote my pleasure is unbounded, because I know that I am voting not only in accordance with the wishes, but in support of the interests of the millions of this country.

Viscount *Palmerston* only rose to express, in a few words, the reason which would regulate his vote that night. He thought the hon. Gentleman, the Member for North Lincolnshire, had relieved him from one point of embarrassment with respect to that vote, by declaring that he will not be found in the lobby with those who are opponents of the sliding scale, for undoubtedly one source of embarrassment, and one circumstance which made it necessary to explain the vote he was about to give, was the fear lest, if he had gone out and voted with the hon. Member, he might have been supposed to have expressed a preference to the scale which that hon. Member meant to propose over that which the right hon. Baronet had suggested. That difficulty was removed. He would make no observation on the tactics so ably displayed that night by hon. Gentlemen on the Benches opposite. The parties sent out to skirmish with the enemy had been recalled to the main body. The whole corps was now drawn up in the same line, ready to meet those whom they considered and knew to be their real opponents. He also wished to be understood, that in opposing the scale of the right hon. Baronet he did not intend to intimate a preference for the law as it now stood. Having voted against the sliding scale, objecting to a sliding scale on principle, he could not concur in any vote now which was in favour of a sliding scale, although it might, perhaps, be better in some respects than the present law, and better than the scale which the hon. Member for Lincolnshire meant to propose. Still he would vote against it, differing from the principle, and believing it to be a higher duty than ought to be imposed.

Mr. *Aglionby*, in reference to the suggestion of the hon. Member for Finsbury, that no one who had last night voted against any duty could consistently vote for this motion, must state that he would be the judge of his own consistency, and vote with the right hon. Baronet. He would not be told by any person there what mode he ought to pursue. In point of form there was only one, but in point of substance there were two proposals before the House. There were two proposals in substance, however much they might shuffle the cards. He had voted with the noble Lord for a fixed duty, which he preferred to all other things; but not being able to obtain that, he had voted last night with the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, as the next best thing he could obtain; and now he would vote for the right hon. Baronet's plan, because he honestly and *bonâ fide* wished to get the lowest duty. Suppose by shuffling the cards they defeated the right hon. Baronet and carried the point of the higher duty, how did he know that those who had voted with him upon that would not turn round at the next step? His honest object was to carry the lowest duty, and therefore, consistent or inconsistent, he would vote with the right hon. Baronet.

Sir *Robert Peel* thought the hon. and learned Gentleman had taken the judicious and the correct course. The noble Lord had proposed his question of a fixed duty, the hon. Gentleman had supported that. The hon. Member for Wolverhampton had proposed the absolute and immediate repeal, the hon. Gentleman had supported that also. The question now was between a 20*s*. and a 25*s*. duty. [“*No, no.*”] Suppose that was not the question, yet if the hon. Gentleman thought this proposal an improvement on the existing law, he was perfectly consistent in voting for it; his vote that night would not commit him in any future stage; and if in the further proceeding he should think either that the change was no improvement, or that it was such an improvement that he did not think it worth while to support it, his vote that night would not bind him. He thought, therefore, that the hon. Gentleman's course was perfectly consistent. The noble Lord (Viscount Palmerston) had spoken of skirmishers, and had recommended that there should be no parties of skirmishers. He was not sorry for this rebuke to his hon. Friend, and he entreated hon. Gentlemen on that (the Ministerial) side of the House, to profit by the lesson which had been taught them, and see the danger of skirmishing, the danger of sending up pilot balloons, and see that, so far from what they recommended being received with welcome and gratitude, the whole force of the speeches of those who were about to vote with them was directed against them. The noble Lord said that he felt relieved, because his (Sir

Robert Peel's) hon. Friend would not be found voting with him. Why should not his hon. Friend feel exactly the same relief? The noble Lord would have the misfortune to go out as one of a great body; but what would be the position of his hon. Friend? He would be exposed alone, without support; for the course which hon. Gentlemen opposite took, was enough to deter others from voting with his hon. Friend. If, therefore, the noble Lord, voting with a body, felt this relief, what must be the feelings of his hon. Friend when exposed in such company? His hon. Friend has sufficient discrimination and wisdom not to fall into the trap that had been vainly set for him. Having already spoken three times in these debates, he had necessarily anticipated much of the present discussion, so that it was hardly requisite for him at that hour, past twelve o'clock, to enter at length upon this subject. His bill, as he expressed at the time, was proposed, first, because he believed that a graduated duty was preferable to a fixed duty; and next, he considered that upon the whole, the scale which he proposed was consistent with the real interests of the country. The hon. Gentleman, the Member for Finsbury, had done him the justice to say, that he had no other intention and no other wish; and he fairly owned, that if his hon. Friend, by any combination of party had carried his motion, if he had strength enough in that House to enforce his views, he could not have been a party to giving effect to his views, for he thought that the protection to be given by his bill was ample, and he could not be a party to its increase. He thought that no undue apprehensions should be excited, which might lead to the curtailment of the quantity of land cultivated in this country, at the same time he thought that the protection afforded by his proposal was ample. One word as to the averages. His hon. Friend said that the mode of taking the averages was a great improvement, combined as it was with a reduction of the duty. It was by making the fall in the duty more gradual that he looked for the great security against frauds in the averages. He believed that no other security could be taken, except by diminishing the great inducement held out by the present law for tampering with the averages; and he thought the proposed law would be a great improvement, because it would diminish the tendency to bring in a great quantity of corn at the lowest duty of 1*s.* He begged again, however, to repeat, that he did not intend to raise the duty or to increase the amount of protection by the new mode of taking the averages. He thought that it was a legitimate object to prevent frauds, but he did not, and never had intended, to raise the duties. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. F. T. Baring) thought that the measure, as it was introduced, should be perfect, and, with a temper more irritated than usual, owing, perhaps, to his recollection of the fate of his sugar question, he declared that the measure should admit of no modification. It was not easy to tell beforehand the exact operation of any plan. Till the intentions of the Government were known it was not even easy to get accurate information. Those intentions ought to be kept secret, but when they were announced they could soon obtain that assistance. He declared that if he were convinced that his mode of taking the averages were certain to increase them 5*s.*, though he thought that impossible, or even if they were increased 2*s.*, he should be prepared to reconsider the mode of taking the averages, doing all he could to prevent fraud, but carefully abstaining from doing any thing indirectly to extend protection; because he conceived that the duty in the bill was sufficient. Only one point more. The hon. Gentleman (Mr. C. Wood) had used an argument which ought to satisfy many who would vote with him that night, that the proposed bill was a great improvement on the existing law, and that it would afford a constant importation of corn into this country at a less price than 60*s.* a quarter. The hon. Gentleman calculates that from 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 quarters may be annually imported into this country at a price of 45*s.* Now, if 2,000,000 quarters could be imported at 45*s.* a quarter, let him say what would be the consequence of so great a demand upon the prices on the continent; it must have a tendency to increase the price. If, therefore, two millions could be imported at a price of 45*s.*, one million could be secured for importation at a less price. Let him take this price of 45*s.* Suppose the price in England were 58*s.*, corn imported would pay a duty of 14*s.* The hon. Gentleman said, that from 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 quarters could be imported here, duty paid, at a price of 59*s.*

Mr. *C. Wood* observed that he never said so. What he had stated was, that no quantity of corn worth consideration could ever be imported at a price under 45*s.*, and he took the shortest instance. He stated, that in 1833 only 1,100 quarters had been imported, at a price of 41*s.* 10*d.* He had said, therefore, that he did not believe that any quantity of corn could be brought here at a price under 45*s.* He never said, that 2,000,000 quarters could be imported at that price, but that no quantity could be brought under 45*s.*

Sir *R. Peel* said, that what he had stated appeared in the note which he wrote at the time, but probably he had mistaken the hon. Gentleman. He felt, that it was very difficult to draw an exact inference as to the effect of the measure; but all that he asked was, that hon. Gentlemen would, at present, confine themselves to its details. He would not delay the committee by vindicating Lord Ashburton's mission, as that appeared to him to have nothing to do with the question before them. He repeated, he only asked the House to look at the details of the scale at present, as there would be ample opportunities of discussing the principle and the general purport of the bill on the second reading or in subsequent stages. He would remind hon. Gentlemen that the person who undertook to propose an alteration of the Corn-laws had no easy task, as he was liable to be charged with an attack on the agricultural interest on the one hand, and an attempt to uphold a system almost of prohibition on the other. Even within a very short time the millers had told him that they should be ruined by the adoption of his proposed scale, for they said that under it there would be such an extension of trade and such an increased importation of foreign corn as to lead to a complete change in the existing proportions of wheat and flour imported into this country. They alleged that the increased importation of foreign corn would have the effect of holding out an inducement to the importation of foreign flour instead of wheat. The barley-growers also declared that the adoption of the scale would be most injurious to them, and the oat-growers in Ireland made nearly the same complaints, and, as the hon. Gentleman opposite said, very few persons on his (Sir R. Peel's) side of the House appeared satisfied. He thought he could vindicate his scale as regarded both barley and oats, and he felt satisfied that, after the lapse of a short time, the more moderate men of all parties would regard the scale with satisfaction, for its effect would be to prevent an immense importation of foreign corn when the duty was merely nominal, and in the place of it, substitute a more regular trade in corn, which would prevent such extreme fluctuations in the prices. The communications made to him since he had brought forward his measure had made the greatest impression on his mind—much more so than any figures that he had seen on the subject; and he was convinced that the result would be that many of them, possessed of moderation and good sense, who now disapproved of the plan, would on further reflection, be satisfied that such an alteration of the law was desirable, and would rally round it. There were extreme opinions on both sides, for one party said that the plan would be attended with the ruin of agriculture, while others declared that it would have no effect in diminishing the distresses of the country. All he then asked was, that they should calmly discuss the details of the plan, and he trusted that in its subsequent stages hon. Gentlemen would consider and debate it without excitement, and not introduce topics which would take them from the fair consideration of the question.

Sir *D. Roche* could not help complaining that not sufficient consideration had been given to the operation of the measure on the interests of Ireland, and above all as regarded oats. He trusted that a fair opportunity would be given for the discussion of this part of the question, and that Members from that part of the kingdom would have every facility afforded them to state their opinions, and he had no doubt that they would be able to show, that not the same justice had been dealt out to the Irish grower as to the English agriculturist.

The Committee divided on the original question,—that under the price of 51*s.* the duty shall be, for every quarter of wheat 20*s.* :—Ayes 306; Noes 104: Majority 202.

List of the AYES.

Acland, Sir T. D.	Adderley, C. B.
Acland, T. D.	Aglionby, H. A.
Acton, Col.	Alford, Visct.
Adare, Visct.	Allix, J. P.

Antrobus, E.
Archdall, M.
Arkwright, G.
Armstrong, Sir A.
Ashley, Lord
Astell, William
Attwood, J. H.
Bagge, William
Bagot, hon. W.
Bailey, J.
Bailey, J. jun.
Bailey, Col.
Baillie, H. J.
Baldwin, C. B.
Baring, hon. W. B.
Barneby, J.
Barrington, Visct.
Baskerville, T. B. M.
Bateson, Sir R.
Beckett, W.
Bell, M.
Benett, J.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Beresford, Major
Beresford, Captain
Bernard, Visct.
Blackburne, J. I.
Blakemore, R.
Bodkin, W. H.
Bodkin, J. J.
Boldero, H. G.
Borthwick, P.
Botfield, B.
Bowes, J.
Bramston, T. W.
Broadley, H.
Broadwood, H.
Brownrigg, J. S.
Bruce, Lord E.
Bruce, C. L. C.
Buck, L. W.
Buller, Sir J. Y.
Burrell, Sir C. M.
Burroughes, H. N.
Campbell, Sir H.
Campbell, A.
Carnegie, hn. Capt.
Cartwright W. R.
Charteris, hon. F.
Chelsea, Viscount
Chetwode, Sir J.
Cholmondeley, hn. H.
Christmas, W.
Christopher, R. A.
Chute, W. L. W.
Clayton, R. R.
Clerk, Sir G.
Clive, hon. R. H.
Cochrane, A.
Cockburn, rt. h. Sir G.
Codrington, C. W.
Cole, hon. A. H.
Collett, W. R.
Colville, C. R.
Compton, H. C.
Connolly, Col.
Corry, right hon. H.
Courtney, Visct.
Cresswell, B.
Cripps, W.
Crosse, T. B.
Damer, hon. Col.
Darby, G.
Dawnay, hon. W. H.
Denison, E. B.
Dickinson, F. H.
D'Israeli, B.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Douglas, Sir H.
Douro, Marquess of
Dowdeswell, W.
Drummond, H. H.
Duffield, T.
Duncombe, hon. A.
Duncombe, hon. O.
Du Pre, C. G.
East, J. B.
Eaton, R. J.
Egerton, W. T.
Egerton, Sir P.
Eliot, Lord
Emlyn, Visct.
Escott, B.
Esmonde, Sir T.
Estcourt, T. G. B.
Farnham, E. B.
Fellowes, E.
Ferguson, Sir R. A.
Feilden, W.
Ferrand, W. B.
Filmer, Sir E.
Fitzroy, Captain
Fleming, J. W.
Ffolliott, J.
Forbes, W.
Forester, hon. G.C.W.
Fuller, A. E.
Gaskell, J. M.
Gladstone, rt. hn. W. E.
Godson, R.
Gordon, hon. Captain
Gore, M.
Gore, W. O.
Gore, W. R. O.
Goring, C.
Goulburn, rt. hon. H.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Granby, Marquess of
Grant, Sir A. C.
Greenall, P.
Greenaway, C.
Gregory, W. H.
Grimston, Visct.
Grogan, E.
Hale, R. B.
Halford, H.
Hamilton, C. J. B.
Hamilton, W. J.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Harcourt, G. G.
Hardinge, rt. hn. Sir H.
Hardy, J.
Hatton, Captain V.
Hawkes, T.
Hayes, Sir E.
Heathcote, Sir W.
Heneage, G. H. W.
Henley, J. W.
Hepburn, Sir T. B.
Herbert, hon. H.
Hill, Sir R.
Hinde, J. H.
Hodgson, R.
Hogg, J. W.
Holmes, hn. W. A'Ct.
Hope, hon. C.
Hope, A.
Hope, G. W.
Hornby, J.
Hughes, W. B.
Ingestre, Visct.
Inglis, Sir R. H.
Irton, S.
Jackson, J. D.
James, Sir W. C.
Jermyn, Earl
Johnson, W. G.
Johnstone, Sir J.
Johnstone, H.
Joliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Jones, Captain
Kelburne, Visct.
Kemble, H.
Kirk, P.
Knatchbull, rt. h. Sir E.
Knight, H. G.
Knight, F. W.
Knightley, Sir C.
Law, hon. C. E.
Lawson, A.
Legh, G. C.
Leicester, Earl of
Lemon, Sir C.
Lennox, Lord A.
Liddell, Hon. H. T.
Lincoln, Earl of
Lindsay, H. H.
Litton, E.
Lockhart, W.
Long, W.
Lowther, J. H.
Lygon, hon. General
Mackenzie, T.
Mackenzie, W. F.
Maclean, D.
MacGeachy, F. A.
Mahon, Visct.
Mainwaring, T.
Manners, Lord J.
March, Earl of
Marsham, Visct.
Martin, C. W.
Martyn, C. C.
Marton, G.
Master, T. W. C.
Masterman, J.
Maunsell, T. P.
Miles, P. W. S.
Miles, W.
Milnes, R. M.
Mitchell, T. A.
Mordaunt, Sir J.
Morgan, O.
Mundy, E. M.
Murray, C. R. S.
Neeld, J.
Neeld, John
Neville, R.
Newry, Visct.
Nicholl, rt. hon. J.
Norreys, Lord
Northland, Visct.
O'Brien, A. S.
Owen, Sir J.
Packe, C. W.
Paget, Lord W.
Pakington, J. S.
Palmer, R.
Palmer, G.
Patten, J. W.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Peel, J.
Plumptre, J. P.
Polhill, F.
Pollock, Sir F.
Powell, Colonel
Power, J.
Praed, W. T.
Pringle, A.
Pusey, P.
Rae, rt. hon. Sir W.
Rashleigh, W.
Reade, W. M.
Reid, Sir J. R.
Repton, G. W. J.
Richards, R.
Rolleston, Col.
Rose, rt. hon. Sir G.
Round, C. G.
Round, J.
Rushbrooke, Col.
Russell, C.
Russell, J. D.
Ryder, hon. G. D.
Sanderson, R.
Sandon, Visct.
Scarlett, hon. R. C.
Scott, hon. F.
Sheppard, T.
Shirley, E. J.
Shirley, E. P.
Sibthorp, Col.
Smith, A.
Smyth, Sir H.
Smythe, hon. G.
Smollett, A.
Somerset, Lord G.
Somerton, Visct.
Sotherton, T. H. S
Stanley, Lord
Stanley, E.
Stanton, W. H.
Stewart, J.
Stuart, H.
Sturt, H. C.
Sutton, hon. H. M.
Taylor, T. E.
Taylor, J. A.

Tennent, J. E.
Thesiger, F.
Thompson, Mr. Ald.
Thornhill, G.
Tollemache, J.
Tomline, G.
Trevor, hon. G. Rice
Trollope, Sir J.
Trotter, J.
Turnor, C.
Tyrell, Sir J. T.
Vere, Sir C. B.
Verner, Colonel
Villiers, Visct.
Vivian, J. E.
Waddington, H. S.
Walsh, Sir J. B.
White, S.
Whitmore, T. C.
Wilbraham, hon. R.B.
Wilmot, Sir J. E.
Winnington, Sir T. E.
Wodehouse, E.
Wood, Colonel T.
Wortley, hon. J. S.
Wyndham, Col.
Wyndham, W.
Yorke, hon. E. T.
Young, J.
Young, Sir W.

TELLERS.
Fremantle, Sir T.
Baring, H.

List of the Noes.

Ainsworth, P.
Aldam, W.
Barclay, D.
Baring, rt. hon. F. T.
Berkeley, hon. C.
Bernal, R.
Blake, M.
Blake, Sir V.
Blewitt, R. J.
Bowring, Dr.
Brocklehurst, J.
Brotherton, J.
Buller, C.
Busfeild, W.
Chapman, B.
Childers, J. W.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Cowper, hon. W. F.
Craig, W. G.
Curteis, H. B.
Dalrymple, Captain
Divett, E.
Duncan, G.
Ellis, W.
Evans, W.
Ewart, W.
Fielden, J.
Fitzalan, Lord
Fitzroy, Lord C.
Forster, M.
Gill, T.
Gordon, Lord F.
Gore, hon. Captain
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Hall, Sir. B.
Harford, S.
Hastie, A.
Hawes, B.
Heathcoat, J.
Heneage, E.
Hill, Lord M.
Hindley, C.
Hobhouse, rt.hn. Sir J.
Horsman, E.
Howard, hn. C. W. G.
Hutt, W.
Jardine, W.
Johnston, Alex.
Labouchere, rt. hn. H.
Lambton, H.
Langston, J. H.
Larpent, Sir G. de H.
Layard, Captain
Macaulay, rt. hn. T. B.
Marshall, W.
Marsland, H.
Martin, J.
Mitcalfe, H.
Morris, D.
Morrison, W.
Muntz, G. F.
Murphy, F. S.
Murray, A.
Napier, Sir C.
O'Brien, W. S.
O'Connell, M. J.
Palmerston, Visct.
Parker, J.
Pechell, Captain
Philips, G. R.
Philips, M.
Pinney, W.
Plumridge, Captain
Powell, C.
Rawdon, Col.
Redington, T. N.
Rennie, G.
Rice, E. R.
Roche, Sir D.
Rundle, J.
Scholefield, J.
Smith, J. A.
Smith, rt. hon. R. V.
Somerville, Sir W. M.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Stuart, Lord J.
Strickland, Sir G.
Strutt, E.
Tancred, H. W.
Thornely, T.
Towneley, J.
Tufnell, H.
Turner, E.
Wakley, T.
Wallace, R.
Ward, H. G.
Wawn, J. T.
Wigney, I. N.
Wilson, M.
Wood, B.
Wood, C.
Wood, G. W.
Worsley, Lord
Yorke, H. R.

TELLERS.
Duncombe, T.
Humphery, H.

The scale of duties on wheat, for which see *ante*, page 236, was then agreed to.

The House resumed. The Chairman of the Committee reported progress. Committee to sit again.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, February 28, 1842.

Minutes.] Bills. *Public.*—1ª. Local Courts.
Private.—1ª. Ludlow Corporation.
2ª. Witt's Estate.
Royal Assent.—Duchy of Cornwall.

Petitions Presented. By Lord Strafford, from three Presbyterian Congregations of Tyrone, Lord Brougham, from similar Congregations in Antrim, Douro, and Armagh, Lord Campbell, from a Congregation of Armagh, and the Duke of Argyll, from a similar Congregation, for Legalising Marriages by Dissenters.—By the Earl of Minto, from Roxburghshire, Lord Brougham, (six) from Montrose, Sunderland, and places in Fife and Yorkshire, and Lord Kinnaird, from Perth and other places, for the Repeal of the Corn-laws.—By the Earl of Clare, from the Chamber of Commerce of Limerick, for an Increased Protection for Oats.—By Lord Hawarden, from places in Ireland, against any Alteration in the Corn-laws.—From Millers of Cahir, and other places in Ireland, against Importation of Flour.—From Sutton, and Duckmanton, in favour of Proposed Measure.

Local Courts Bill.] Lord *Brougham* said, that he was about to present to their Lordships a bill, similar to one which he had introduced nine years ago, and which, on that occasion, had very nearly, he might say all but received their sanction—he meant the bill for the establishment of Local Courts. He was perfectly aware, that a noble and learned Friend of his, who had lately occupied the woolsack, (Lord Cottenham) had expressed his intention of bringing in a bill for the establishment of county courts. There was no doubt that the bill of his noble and learned Friend would effect several of the improvements which he expected from his (Lord Brougham's) bill; but, though it would do that, it would still fall very far short of what he proposed to effect. For example, his noble and learned Friend proposed to extend the jurisdiction of county courts in matters of debt from cases of 40*s*. to 20*l*., and they were also to be made available for bankruptcy and insolvency. His (Lord Brougham's) bill gave to the local courts jurisdiction in all matters of debt of 20*l*., but it went much beyond that, and gave them power to try all actions of tort—as assault and battery—libel, and seduction, malicious arrest—suing out commissions of bankruptcy, and, in fact, of all personal actions, provided the damages sought to be recovered did not exceed 50*l*. There was another and most important part of the measure which he valued if possible still more, namely, that the judges of the county courts should have a voluntary jurisdiction in actions to any amount and of any description where the consent of both parties was given in writing. Thus parties who consented might have justice administered in actions to any amount and respecting rights of any kind real, personal, or mixed, at, he might say, their own door. There was a part of the former bill which he would also propose to retain—he meant the courts of reconcilement, which had been productive of so much advantage in preventing litigation wherever they had been tried. He might mention that in one country, not that in which it had been first applied, but one in which it had worked the best, the kingdom of Denmark, its effects had been so salutary, that out of 31,000 causes entered for hearing, 21,000 had been settled by this court of reconcilement; thus saving the parties a great deal of vexatious litigation and a vast amount of expense. This branch of the measure he would retain in his present bill, and, in fact, he did not propose to make any material alteration, save in the 19th section, which related to courts of requests. He had saved their jurisdiction by a clause in the bill of 1833; he proposed now to abolish it. The bill gave the local courts full jurisdiction in bankruptcy, and in aid of the Court of Chancery, both as to examination of evidence and various other matters now done, expensively and badly, by commissioners as in the Master's-office. With these few introductory remarks, he would now lay the bill on their Lordships' Table. He did not say then, since the time when he had first introduced this measure, their Lordships were going forward with respect to judicial improvements; but he hoped he might say they were not going backward. Their Lordships were at one time "very near" consenting to this bill, such as he had described it. He could easily imagine the feeling of triumph with which his noble and learned Friend on the woolsack would hear the words "very near," as applied to the chance which the bill had of receiving the sanction of their Lordships; but, with all the advantages of his noble and learned Friend, which his great powers of mind brought to bear against the measure, and which even those powers would have found unavailing without the additional advantage of having had a majority acting with him, it was some consolation to him (Lord Brougham), that after a full discussion of its merits, in a by no means thin attendance, there were eighty-one noble Lords divided on one side, and eighty-one or eighty-two, he could not recollect which, divided on the other. That was, there were so many noble Lords present who heard the discussion; but the preponderance against the bill arose out of that inherent and exclusive privilege which their Lordships only, of all other bodies in the kingdom, possessed, of voting by proxy. By the exercise of that privilege, which enabled any of their Lordships to record their votes for or against any measure, which they never heard discussed, and to the merits of which possibly they might never have given a thought, his bill had been defeated—defeated by the proxy votes of some twelve or thirteen noble Lords, who had decided on a cause which they had not heard. Though he admitted that in this there was something discouraging to him in again laying on the Table the same bill, still there was also something to encourage him to proceed—that was, the hope that, after the experience of nine years, their Lordships would not be content with a less improvement of the local administration of justice than that to which they had so nearly consented on the former occasion, surely, they never could now rest satisfied with a smaller measure. Besides this almost sanction of their Lordships, let him add that the bill had the full approbation of the Commissioners of Common Law Inquiry, to whom it had been referred. It had also had the sanction of his noble Friends who then sat on that (the Ministerial), but who now sat on this (the Opposition) side of the House. He hoped that neither the lapse of time, nor the change of circumstances, would be found to have altered their opinion on it. He reckoned at least on their support. They (the present Opposition) had in 1833, given his larger plan of Law Reform their hearty, strenuous and united support. He might certainly rely upon their giving the same plan the same steady and unhesitating support now, which they had lent it when in office.

The *Lord Chancellor* said, that his noble and learned Friend was quite right in saying, that the numbers who voted in the House on his bill were equal, and that there were thirteen proxies; but he would not then enter into any discussion as to how far the merits of the case were touched by that circumstance. He would now only add, that it was his intention to lay on the Table in a few days, a bill having the same object as that of his noble and learned Friend. There would be then three bills on the same subject before the House, including that of his noble and learned Friend (Lord Cottenham). It would be for their Lordships to decide which of those they should adopt, or whether they would frame a measure by amalgamating all three.

Lord *Campbell* expressed a hope that, before the present session closed, some measure might be passed for establishing improved local courts. We were the only country in Europe which was without such courts. It was true we had county courts and manorial and borough courts, but they had for the most part fallen into disuse from the want of efficient judges to preside over them.

Bill read a first time.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, February 28, 1842.

MINUTES.] BILLS. *Public.*—2°. Railways.

Private.—2°. Granton Pier; Cwm Celyn Iron Co.; Cambrian Iron Co.; St. Philip's (Bristol) Bridge; Bristol Boundary; Staleybridge Gas; Clee Inclosure; Southwark Improvement (No. 1); Cottenham Inclosure; Cottenham Drainage.

Considered.—Marriages (Ireland); Corn Importation.

Reported.—Van Dieman's Land; Apprentices Regulation.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Mr. Christmas, from Waterford Chamber of Commerce, Colonel Acton, from the county of Wicklow, and Sir D. Roche, from the Limerick Chamber of Commerce, against the proposed Corn Duties.—By Mr. W. Evans, from Chesterfield, Dr. Bowring, from Traders in Manchester, and other places, Sir W. Clay, from Hackney, and other places, Lord Duncan, Mr. MacTaggart, Mr. Vernon Smith, and Mr. D. Barclay, from Sunderland, and several other places, for the Total Repeal of the Corn-laws.—By Colonel Conolly, Sir W. Bateson, Sir C. Hayes, Mr. Emerson Tennent, and Colonel Verner, from Presbyterian Congregations in various places (Ireland), for Legalizing certain Marriages by Dissenting Ministers.—By Mr. Brotherton, from Oldham, and from William Binney, against the Employment of Females in Coal Mines.—By Sir H. Douglas, from Liverpool and Manchester Railway Company, and Grand Junction Railway Company, against the Railways Bill.—By Mr. Burroughes, from Millers of Norwich, Viscount Sandon, from Millers in the neighbourhood of London, and an hon. Member, from Millers on King's River Kilkenny, for Protection for the Manufacture of Flour.—By Mr. R. Ferguson, from Londonderry, and Mr. Arkwright, from Sutton, and Duckmanton, in favour of the Ministerial Plan for Altering the Corn-laws.—By an hon. Member, from St. Saviour's, Southwark, and St. Mary-le-Strand, for the Redemption of Tolls on the Metropolitan Bridges.—By an hon. Member, from Kilcolman, and three other places, for an Alteration in the system of Education (Ireland).—By Sir C. Wilmot, from the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, against the Exportation of Hill Coolies.—From Hay and Reeth Unions, for Alteration of Poor-law Amendment Act.—From James Surrey, for Grinding Bonded Corn for Exportation.—From Gateshead, for Better Observance of Lord's Day.

THE POOR OF BOLTON.] Dr. *Bowring* asked whether the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Home Department would have any objection to lay on the Table a memorial addressed to the Government, praying for relief to the poor of Bolton, with the correspondence thereupon.

Sir *James Graham* remembered such an application as that referred to by the hon. Gentleman, and the answer was, that there were no funds disposable for the purpose. He had no objection to produce the memorial and the answer.

LORD ELLENBOROUGH'S SALARY.] Mr. *Hutt* begged to ask whether Lord Ellenborough would continue to receive the compensation for the office formerly held by him, at the same time that he received his salary as Governor-general of India.

Sir *R. Peel* said, he apprehended there was no doubt whatever, that the compensation which Lord Ellenborough received for the office to which he was appointed by his father, then Lord Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench, must, under the law, be continued. But a question might arise whether, under the act, which passed at the time of granting the new charter to the East India Company, a corresponding reduction ought not to be made in the salary of Lord Ellenborough, as Governor-general of India. That, however, would be a question between the East India Company and the Governor-general. If it was decided that the compensation paid to his noble Friend was within the scope of the act of Parliament, a corresponding reduction would be made in the salary; but the benefit would be, not to the consolidated fund, but to the revenue of the East India Company. The subject was at present under the consideration of the East India Company. When he proposed to his noble Friend, then a Cabinet Minister and President of the Board of Control, for this appointment, his noble Friend pointed out to his notice the act of Parliament, and said it would be hard in the performance of a public duty, in accepting the office which he offered him as the person best qualified to succeed Lord Auckland, that his compensation, together with his office as President of the Board of Control, should be given up. But his noble Friend said, that as he accepted office from a sense of public duty, even though the office which he held fell within the provisions of that act, still it would not prevent him from accepting the office of Governor-general. It was now entirely a question for the decision of the East India Company. He looked at the act, and he apprehended the Treasury could not stop the compensation.

CONVEYANCE OF CORN FROM AMERICA.] Sir *C. Napier* asked whether the right hon. Baronet the First Lord of the Treasury had any objection to give a "return of vessels that arrived at Liverpool from America, loaded with corn, from the 1st day of January, 1841, to the first day of January, 1842, specifying the number of days they were on the passage," of which he had given notice.

Sir *Robert Peel* did not know that there were means of giving the information required. In reference to a statement made by him on a former evening, that an order had been sent from Liverpool to New York, and a cargo returned within six weeks, he wished to state that he did not adduce that as an instance of the average duration of the passage between the two ports, but simply as a fact showing the time within which corn could be brought from America.

Sir *C. Napier* said, there was an officer whose duty it was to ascertain when each vessel arrived, and the length of her voyage, amongst other particulars.

Sir *R. Peel* said, if the information could be procured, and given consistently with the usages of Parliament, he should have no objection to give it.

Capt. *Fitzroy* hoped that, if there were the means of supplying the information asked for by the hon. and gallant Member for Marylebone, the Government would give it. He hoped they would go further. He would ask if the right hon. Baronet would also grant a return of the quantity of flour brought over by American vessels to Liverpool, with the number of days such vessels were on their passage.

Sir *R. Peel* had no objection to give that information also.

Mr. *Thornely* wished to put a question to the right hon. Baronet, relative to his statement of the time it had taken, in one instance, to get a cargo of flour from America. The right hon. Baronet had stated that an order had been sent to America for flour, which flour had been received in Liverpool in six weeks. He begged to say that he had received a letter from Liverpool, stating that it was fifty-one days from the sending out of the order to the arrival of the flour in Liverpool. The right hon. Baronet had just stated that the flour was received on the 13th September; his informant stated it to be the 24th. He begged to ask the right hon. Baronet whether he had any objection to lay on the Table of the House a copy of the statement he had referred to.

Sir *Robert Peel:* I read a letter to the House in the handwriting of the person who imported the flour, and if I made any mistake, I am sorry for it. My information stated that the flour was ordered on the 1st of August, and received on the 13th of September. I feel quite sure that this was the statement I received, but I will refer to it again, and give the hon. Member the information he wishes.

ENGLISH REGISTRATION.] In answer to Mr. Elphinstone, Sir *R. Peel* said, as soon as they had made some progress with the important measure now occupying the House, the next bill to which he should call their attention would be one relating to English registration. He would rather not lay any other bill on the Table till the present measure had made some progress.

FEES TO SHERIFFS—(SCOTLAND).] Mr. *F. Maule* begged to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Home Department a question, to which his attention had recently been drawn, relative to a practice in Scotland, which had been adopted by certain sheriffs. In the case of railways requiring more land, they were frequently in the habit of taking any land contiguous to the railway of which they were in need; and questions not unfrequently arose between the railway company and the former proprietors, as to the amount of compensation to be received by the latter for the land thus taken. In these cases the sheriffs, when called upon to interfere, considering that they were acting in an extra-judicial duty, believed themselves entitled to remuneration for their services. His object in referring to this matter was, that it might be made known, as he was sure the right hon. Gentleman would not refuse to call the attention of the Government to it, and he was content, therefore, to leave the matter in the hands of the Government.

Sir *J. Graham* confessed that, until last week his attention had not been drawn to this subject when he was directed by a paragraph in a newspaper. On general principles, he thought that great inconvenience would arise from officers who received salaries for their official duties, looking for other compensation for their services. If their salaries were not sufficient remuneration for all their duties, they should be increased. But he did not understand that in the case to which the right hon. Gentleman had referred the fees were all paid by one party. He believed that the questions decided were questions of arbitration, and that both parties paid fees to the sheriff. He thought that if that were the case, it would materially alter the complexion of such transactions. However, the subject should not be lost sight of.

Subject at an end.

RAILWAYS.] Mr. Gladstone moved the second reading of the Railway Bill.

Viscount *Sandon* said, he did not wish to delay the bill passing through a second reading, but he hoped that a pledge would be given by his right hon. Friend, that ample time would be given for going into the consideration of a law affecting this great branch of enterprise in order that communications, if necessary, might be had with parties interested.

Mr. *Gladstone* said, he believed that no very great time would be required to proceed with this bill; the parties interested were quite alive to its provisions. They had been in communication with the Board of Trade, and would have full time to consider it. He could readily give a pledge that no attempt would be made to interfere with the interests of parties connected with the subject without giving ample time to those parties to make any communication they might think proper.

Bill read a second time.

COLONIAL PASSENGERS.] Mr. *Hawes* thought it had been understood that no business of importance was to be brought on pending the discussion on the Corn-laws. He did not complain, however, of proceeding with the railway, but respecting the next bill on the orders—namely, the Colonial Passengers Bill—he wished to put a question to the noble Lord the Secretary for the Colonies. Believing it to be precisely the same in principle, though perhaps not in all details, with the bill before the House last year, he (Mr. Hawes) meant to give it his most strenuous opposition. Therefore, he begged to ask the noble Lord, whether he meant to move the second reading of his bill that evening. If so, it would be necessary for him to take the sense of the House on the question. On the other hand, if the noble Lord did not mean to proceed to-night, he trusted he would fix some day when the House would have have an opportunity of going into a discussion on the second reading. The bill had been only delivered to Members that morning.

Lord *Stanley* had not expected that the bill would receive any opposition. It was true that it had been put in the hands of hon. Members that morning; but it was entirely founded on the report of the commission which hon. Members had had for a fortnight. Looking to the period of the year coming on, he was very anxious for the bill to come into operation during the present year; but if the hon. Member meant to take the sense of the House on the second reading, he should not move it that night, but fix it for some day when it could be discussed.

Second reading deferred.

MARRIAGES (IRELAND).] Lord *Eliot* moved the Order of the Day for going into Committee on the Marriages (Ireland) Bill.

Mr. *G. H. Vernon* said, he had in the first instance looked at the measure with some jealousy. He was anxious that a partial measure of this kind should not give any additional effect to what had been understood to be the law. At the same time he was not prepared to say that after close attention to it he had any objection to offer to the general principle of the bill. It was impossible to deny that some colourable construction might be given to the idea which he understood prevailed, that mixed marriages by Presbyterian ministers were invalid, and that contracts might be entered into as if such marriages had not any legal effect. He thought it important that the public should be set right on this point, and that it should be understood that persons who had entered into such contracts after this measure had been announced by the Government had done so in the face of such measure, if not in the face of the law. He thought it very desirable that the general enactment on the subject should be brought in as speedily as possible, and that it should be sent to the House of Lords at such a period as to allow of their Lordships giving it a full and fair consideration.

Mr. *Shaw* approved of this bill as an enacting, and not a declaratory bill. It was necessary to settle the peace of families and security of property, which might be seriously disturbed by the decision of the judges. When the whole subject came to be considered, he should wish to see the marriage law of Ireland assimilated to that of England. But he should strongly object to the House sanctioning prospectively such marriages as those which would be legalised by the present bill.

Sir *R. Bateson* stated that such a bill as this was loudly called for by the whole of the North of Ireland. He trusted, therefore, that it would be passed into a law, as soon as possible.

Mr. *O'Connell* wished the House to legalise the marriages between Protestants and Presbyterians, when solemnized by a Presbyterian clergyman, prospectively as well as retrospectively; and that they should, in this respect, make the law in Ireland that which it had always been supposed to be. Presbyterians of the richer class were much in the habit of late of frequenting places of worship of the Established Church, and if they did not adopt the suggestions that he made to them, he thought they would do that which would not much increase Episcopalian Protestantism in Ireland.

House in committee.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Upon clause 2, which declared that this act was not to render any marriage declared invalid by a competent jurisdiction.

Mr. Smith O'Brien moved that the clause be omitted.

Mr. *Sergeant Jackson* opposed the motion. The clause was absolutely necessary, unless the House meant to set aside the solemn accession of the judges.

Sir *G. Grey* said, that if persons were married a second time, availing themselves of the late decision of the Irish judges, they ought to be made legally responsible for the support of the children of the first marriage.

Mr. *Jackson* promised to take the point into consideration between that time and the bringing up of the report.

The committee divided on the question that the clause stand part of the bill:— Ayes 159; Noes 63: Majority 96.

List of the Ayes.

Acton, Col.
Adare, Visc.
Allix, J. P.
Arkwright, G.
Bagge, W.
Bailey, J.
Baillie, Col.
Baillie, H. J.
Baird, W.
Baldwin, C. B.
Barclay, D.
Baring, hon. W. B.
Barrington, Visc.
Baskerville, T. B. M.
Beckett, W.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Beresford, Major
Bernard, Visc.
Bodkin, J. J.
Boldero, H. G.
Borthwick, P.
Botfield, B.
Bradshaw, J.
Bramston, T. W.
Broadley, H.
Broadwood, H.
Bruce, Lord E.
Buller, Sir J. Y.
Burdett, Sir F.
Cartwright, W. R.
Chelsea, Visc.
Chetwode, Sir J.
Chute, W. L. W.
Clay, Sir W.
Clerk, Sir G.
Collett, W. R.
Connolly, Col.
Copeland, Mr. Ald.
Corry, rt. hon. H.
Crosse, T. B.
Darby, G.
Dawnay, hon. W. H.
Denison, E. B.
Dickinson, F. H.
Douglas, Sir H.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Drummond, H. H.
Duncombe, A.
Duncombe, hn. O.
Du Pre, C. G.
East, J. B.
Eliot, Lord
Escott, B.
Farnham, E. B.
Feilden, W.
Filmer, Sir E.
Follett, Sir W. W.
Forbes, W.
French, F.
Fuller, A. E.
Gladstone, right hon. W. E.
Gordon, hon. Capt.
Gore, M.
Gore, W. R. O.
Goulburn, rt. hn. H.
Graham, rt. hn. Sir J.
Gregory, W. H.
Grey, rt. hn. Sir G.
Hamilton, W. J.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Hardy, J.
Hayes, Sir E.
Henley, J. W.
Hodgson, F.
Hodgson, R.
Hogg, J. W.
Houldsworth, T.
Holmes, hon. W. A'Ct.
Hope, hon. C.
Hope, G. W.
Hughes, W. B.
Ingestre, Visc.
Jermyn, Earl
Johnstone, H.
Joliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Jones, Capt.
Lambton, H.
Lawson, A.
Lincoln, Earl of
Lindsay, H. H.
Litton, E.
Lockhart, W.
Lygon, hon. General
Mackenzie, W. F.
MacGeachy, F. A.
Mainwaring, T.
Manners, Lord J.
March, Earl of
Marsham, Viscount
Martin, C. W.
Masterman, J.
Miles, W.
Milnes, R. M.
Mitchell, T. A.
Mordaunt, Sir J.

Morgan, O.
Mundy, E. M.
Neville, R.
Nicholl, rt. hn. J.
Northland, Visc.
Ossulston, Lord
Packe, C. W.
Pakington, J. S.
Palmer, G.
Palmerston, Visc.
Patten, J. W.
Peel, rt. hn. Sir R.
Peel, J.
Pendarves, E. W. W.
Plumptre, J. P.
Polhill, F.
Praed, W. T.
Pusey, P.
Rae, rt. hn. Sir W.
Reade, W. M.
Redington, T. M.
Richards, R.
Rolleston, Col.
Round, C. G.
Rous, hon. Capt.
Rushbrooke, Col.
Scott, hon. F.
Shaw, rt. hn. F.
Shirley, E. J.
Shirley, E. P.
Smythe, hon. G.
Somerset, Lord G.
Stanley, Lord
Stanley, E.
Stewart, J.
Stuart, W. V.
Stuart, H.
Sturt, H. C.
Sutton, hon. H. M.
Taylor, T. E.
Tennent, J. E.
Thornhill, G.
Trollope, Sir J.
Tyrell, Sir J. T.
Vere, Sir C. B.
Verner, Col.
Vernon, G. H.
Vyvyan, Sir R. R.
Waddington, H. S.
Wakley, T.
Wilbraham, hn. R. B.
Wilmot, Sir J. E.
Wodehouse, E.
Wyndham, Col.
Young, J.

TELLERS.

Jackson, J. D.
Fremantle, Sir P.

List of the NOES.

Acheson, Visc.
Aldam, W.
Barnard, E. G.
Blake, Sir V.
Blewitt, R. J.
Bowes, J.
Bowring, Dr.
Brotherton, J.
Browne, hon. W.
Burrell, Sir C. M.
Busfeild, W.
Chapman, B.
Cobden, R.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Crawford, W. S.
Dawson, hon. T. V.
Dennistoun, J.
Duncan, G.
Duncombe, T.
Ebrington, Visc.
Elphinstone, H.
Esmonde, Sir T.
Ferguson, Col.
Forster, M.
Gill, T.
Gordon, Lord F.
Gore, hon. Capt.
Hatton, Capt. V.
Hawes, B.
Hay, Sir A. L.
Hindley, C.
Howard, hn. C. W. G.
Hutt, W.
Johnston, A.
Kemble, H.
Knight, H. G.
M'Taggart, Sir J.
Marsland, H.
Martin, J.
Morris, D.
Murphy, F. S.
Napier, Sir C.
O'Connell, D.
O'Connell, M. J.
O'Conor, Don
Philips, M.
Plumridge, Capt.
Powell, C.
Power, J.
Rawdon, Col.
Rundle, J.
Scott, R.
Somerville, Sir W. M.
Stanley, hon. W. O.
Strutt, E.
Thornely, T.
Tufnell, H.
Turner, E.
Villiers, hon. C. P.
Wawn, J. T.
Wilson, M.
Wood, B.
Wood, G. W.

TELLERS.

O'Brien, W. S.
Maule, hon. F.

Remaining clauses agreed to.

Bill to be reported.

House resumed.

CORN-LAWS—MINISTERIAL PLAN—BARLEY, OATS, &c.—COLONIAL PRODUCE.] The order of the Day read. House in committee upon the Corn-laws.

Mr. *Wodehouse* would not trespass upon the patience of the committee, did he not believe that his duty to his constituents rendered it necessary for him to call its attention to the proposed alterations in the laws affecting the importation of food, with reference to the degree of protection it was proposed to confer upon the growers of barley. He would now move, with a view to the clauses relative to the proposed duty on barley being left for after consideration, that the chairman report progress, and ask leave to sit again. He considered that the proposed protection to be given to the barley grower was not sufficient, and not proportionate to that to be conferred upon the wheat grower. Although unwilling to fatigue the House after the protracted discussion they had listened to on subjects of the nature in question, he could not help calling the attention of the House to the papers upon the Table relative to the capabilities of Denmark as a barley-growing country. These documents proved that Denmark was more peculiarly adapted for the successful cultivation of this species of grain than almost any country, and that there were there thousands of acres ready for the plough, and that the internal means of communication by railroads, &c., through Denmark, Holstein, and the adjacent provinces, were of the first order. He thought that, under these circumstances, no man would say that the arguments *quoad* protection to the wheat farmer applied with the same force *quoad* the grower of barley and oats. It was stated that they had no grounds for alarm on account of the inferior quality of continental barley, which would not malt. He had it, however, on the authority of a gentleman, whose judgment on the point was indisputable, that the finest sample of barley he had ever seen was grown in France. There was one point in particular to which he wished to call the attention of the House. He had applied to the Board of Trade to learn whether it were the intention of Government to make any alteration with respect to the present duties on malt. He, however, could get no answer upon this important point. He had applied a second time, and the reply he then received was, "You must wait." He was thus obliged to throw himself upon the House upon a question involving the food of millions;

the welfare of the county which he represented was intimately connected with the answer to be given to the question he had put to her Majesty's Government; and it seemed to him that the intentions of Government in that respect ought no longer to be concealed. He would ask the right hon. Baronet, the Secretary for the Home Department, whether, if a gentleman had a barley-growing farm, and an occupier offered so much for it, making at the same time a stipulation that the bargain should not be binding in case of an alteration in the duties on malt—he would ask the right hon. Baronet if it was not a hard case, that under such circumstances, no answer should be returned to the application which he had made to her Majesty's Government? He would ask the right hon. Baronet, the Paymaster-general of the Forces, whether he were prepared to deal out to the agriculturist interest a severer measure than that inflicted by that committee on agriculture, of which Mr. Huskisson and Lord Londonderry were members? He would finally allude to the right hon. Baronet at the head of her Majesty's Government. Several weeks ago he had considered it to be his duty to press these matters upon the right hon. Gentleman's attention. In an interview which a few days ago he had the honour of obtaining with that right hon. Gentleman, he had called his attention to the proposed differences to be made in the laws referring to the importation of foreign live stock and meat; for, as far as he was concerned, he was in equal doubt as to the intentions of her Majesty's Government with respect to these laws, and its intentions with regard to the duties upon the introduction of foreign malt. He had pressed these matters upon the attention of the right hon. Baronet, the First Lord of the Treasury, not from a wish to perplex or worry that right hon. Gentleman, but because he was deeply impressed with the conviction, that on the manner in which they were to be treated rested the prosperity and welfare of a great portion of the agricultural community. If the prices of stock, &c., were to be reduced—he did not say to the level, but approximating to the level of continental prices—they must also approximate, in the same degree, to the continental rate of wages; and if this did come to pass, then he would say that, looking upon the subject with reference to the new Poor-law Act—an act which he was bound to state had benefited the county which he represented to a greater extent than it did many others, yet, despite this, he would say, that if wages were to be lowered from the causes he had alluded to, the New Poor-law Act would become a measure of as intense severity as regarded the agriculturists, as it had already been found with respect to the manufacturers; it would become a measure of such intense severity as would prevent its being acted upon. He would conclude by moving, that the chairman do report progress, and ask leave to sit again. He conceived that the effect of that motion would be, that should it be carried, the proposed duties on barley would be erased from the scale, and left for after consideration.

The *Chairman* explained that no such results would follow from the motion of the hon. Member being carried. Such a motion could only have the effect of leaving the House in the same place with regard to it the next time it went into committee. He suggested that the hon. Gentleman should move that the resolutions should be reported to the House.

Question put, that the resolution relative to the importation of wheat which had been agreed to, be reported to the House.

Sir *R. Peel* said, I confess, though I listened to my hon. Friend with the greatest possible attention, that I could not follow the argument which he has just been addressing to the House. I could not follow the reasoning by which he attempted to show that the proposed scale of duties on barley will be productive of very extensive changes, and of very serious injury to agriculture. It seemed to me, that this argument was not satisfactory. He alluded to my right hon. Friend the Member for Kent, and called upon him to give protection to the barley grower; but he did not, I think, show that the proposed duty on barley would be inadequate for that purpose. My hon. Friend complains, that he did not get an answer to the inquiries which he made as to the intentions of the Government with regard to corn; but if he only knew how many private letters I have received asking for information and explanation, he would feel how difficult it was to give an answer to every individual. But I will at once tell my hon. Friend that there is no intention on the part of the Government to alter the laws which relate to malt. The revenue arising from that source is so great, that I should be very unwilling to do so. But I must think that my hon. Friend completely overrates the importance of protection to home-grown barley and malt. There are such difficulties attending the importation of foreign malt, that the diminution of the duty cannot be supposed to have much effect. I have no hesitation, however, in stating publicly, as I have already stated in private, that her Majesty's Government do not contemplate—do not see any reason why they should alter the law relating to malt. Barley and oats, it must be remembered, stand upon grounds distinct from wheat. Their value is less, and for that very reason they must always necessarily have a greater protection. There may be some slight diminution in the rate of freightage as between oats and barley on the one hand and wheat on the other; but certainly the diminution in freight is not in proportion to their relative value, and for this reason there is an additional protection in favour of oats and barley. From the nature of the article, too, there is the greatest difficulty in importing good barley. If you take the proportion of barley with wheat which has been imported under the present scale, you will find the proportion of barley not any formidable proportion. I account for this by the difficulty which attends its importation. Take Denmark or any of the other countries from which my hon. Friend fears a competition, and I have no doubt that the soil of England is far better fitted for the growth of barley. My hon. Friend speaks of barley from France, but we must not draw inferences from particular instances. In legislating we can only take general results. There are parts of this country in which barley is used as food; but my hon. Friend said, "that wheat is different, because wheat constitutes the food of man, and barley and oats do not." Now, in many parts of the country—in many parts with which I am best acquainted—for instance, in Yorkshire and Lancashire—barley-bread and oatmeal form articles of food amongst the labouring classes. This question was fully discussed In 1827-8; and when I consider the great extent to which oatmeal is used for food amongst the poorer labouring classes, I should be very sorry to increase the protection. My hon. Friend has mentioned the name of Mr. Huskisson. Now, I maintain the same proportion between the different species of grain as Mr. Huskisson did. If greater protection were given to one sort than to another—if the due proportion were not preserved—would you not embarrass the arrangements of the agricultural classes, and the investment of agricultural capital. I think that as much as possible, you ought to preserve the existing relation between the prices of different grain. I am certainly surprised that my hon. Friend should adopt so strong a course as to make a motion, which, if carried, would stop our proceedings altogether. I wish hon. Gentlemen to remember that the wish of my hon. Friend is to increase protection. I hardly expected so strong a step, as the entire suspension of our proceedings, when really there is so little difference between my hon. Friend and myself; for in every place where barley is above 30*s*., he has exactly adopted my scale. When the price of barley is 30*s*. and under 31*s*., the duty is 8*s*. That is my plan, and my hon. Friend's is exactly the same. The whole difference between us is this—I impose a duty of 11*s*., when the price is under 26*s*., and my hon. Friend imposes a duty of 13*s*. Now, my belief is, that 11*s*. will be found sufficient for the protection of the farmer. Under these circumstances, I hope that the House will not agree to the amendment. I do not deny that there is a diminution of protection. There is certainly a diminution, and that diminution we have proposed exactly on the same grounds as we proposed the diminution of the protection upon wheat. But there is no disturbance of the relation. If the House thinks that the time has arrived at which the protection on wheat should be somewhat diminished, there ought to be the same diminution—a fair, not an undue proportion of diminished protection—upon barley likewise. I trust, therefore, that the general impression of the House will be in favour of the proposed scale of duties upon barley. That scale is in fair proportion to the scale of wheat, and it will involve no risk of any sudden interruptions to those pursuits which I agree with my hon. Friend in thinking are interwoven with the best interests of the country, but which will not be injured or impeded by the measure we propose.

Mr. *Cumming Bruce* said, that he would not trespass for many minutes on the time of the committee, after the lengthened discussion which the general question of the Corn-laws had undergone, he should think it worse than supererogation to detain hon. Members by any expression of his opinions. He had contented himself by recording on two occasions by his vote, his dissent from the proposition now twice submitted to the House under different forms, that it was unwise and inexpedient any longer to continue protection to native agriculture. That indeed was, in substance, the proposition both of the noble Lord, the leader of the smaller and less important section of those opposed to the Government, and of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Villiers), who submitted it openly and without disguise, after the root-and-branch fashion of the Radical section of the House, while the noble Lord presented it under a certain veil of mystification, which might conceal its real nakedness, and cover it with a disguise of words which, "while they kept the word of promise to the ear, should break it to the sense;" but both affirmed the same proposition, that all protection to native agriculture should cease, and against both, therefore, he had given a cordial and unhesitating vote. A third vote he had given also without hesitation, that which affirmed the proposed scale of protection on wheat, he was disposed to consider that sufficient. Undoubtedly, under the proposed scale, wheat would be at all times, and under every stage of the scale, imported, and to a certain extent prices would be lowered in the home market; but not so lowered as seriously, at least not ruinously, to affect the farmer, while on the other hand he would derive great advantage from greater steadiness of price, and from the importation not being flooded on the market so as to cause a great declension of price at the very period when it was most important to the smaller farmers that such should not occur. He had, therefore, supported the Government scale for wheat, a sacrifice, undoubtedly, the agricultural interest did make, but they made it willingly, as they hoped it would be cordially received, in proof of their disposition to concede to the wishes of their manufacturing fellow-subjects; and they made it the more willingly as it might tend to secure to all classes the advantage we now enjoyed in having not only a strong, but an honest and upright Government. But as regarded the parts of the scale now under consideration, involving the protection to spring corn, he regretted to say that he could not regard them with similar satisfaction. But first as to the motion of his gallant Friend, the Member for Norfolk, he would say that he understood that motion as intended to afford the Government an opportunity of withdrawing their scale for the present, and thus allowing them time for further consideration—that was his understanding of it. [Colonel *Wodehouse*, "Hear, hear."] Now that was precisely what he wished, because his conviction was that the proposed protection was far too low. If that conviction rested only on his own opinion, he should hesitate in adhering to it when opposed to the views of those whose opinions he so greatly respected as he did those of the present cabinet. But the same opinion, that a higher protection on spring corn was absolutely required to prevent the most injurious consequences to agriculture in Scotland, had been so strongly urged on him by intelligent and practical men, both farmers and corn dealers, some of them his own constituents, that agreeing as he did in the views which they expressed, he could not reconcile it with his duty not to urge on the right hon. Baronet a reconsideration of that part of his scale. In doing so he was sure it was not necessary for him to assure his right hon. Friend that he was not actuated by any feeling of unfriendliness towards his Government, the support which for more than ten years he had felt it his duty to give to his right hon. Friend, and to the views and principles which he had with so great ability and such uniform consistency advocated, would exempt him from the imputation of any such motive, and he would at once assure him, that if the question lay between the stability of his Government, and an acquiescence in the sacrifice he now required, whether he (Mr. C. Bruce) considered his own feelings, or the interests of his constituents, bound up as he conceived their interests to be in the stability of the Government, he should not hesitate to make the sacrifice, and support by his vote the stability of the Government. He could not however view, as a matter affecting the stability of the Government some modification in the scale of protection proposed, if it could be shown that in some essential respects, and as affecting some important interests, it was inadequate; and it was with the hope that his right hon. Friend might be induced to take the same view of it, that he should now venture to submit a few observations to the committee. He would then, first observe, that in all probability, under the operation of the altered scale of protection to wheat, no inconsiderable portion of land now used in the cultivation of that grain would be turned to the growing barley and oats; it became therefore more essential, that they should be sufficiently protected. The lowest protection to which the agriculturists were entitled to look, should, at least, correspond to that on wheat. As far as he could judge of the figures proposed, it did not so correspond, but was considerably lower. It could not be said, that barley, oats, and beans, could not bear a corresponding protection, because, since the present law was in operation, they had borne a proportion considerably higher, and yet no general complaint on the part of the consumer had been raised against the existing law in that respect. It appeared, that the average duty paid on wheat since 1828, was 5*s.* 7*d.*; now, at the same rate the average proportion on barley would have been 3*s.*; it had paid 4*s.* 8*d.*; oats would have been 2*s.* 2*d.*; they had paid 6*s.* 5*d.*; peas would have been 3*s.* 2*d.*; they had paid 5*s.* 9*d.*; beans would have been 3*s.* 2*d.*; they had paid 6*s.* 11*d.* Now this seemed to prove, that those grains could bear a higher average protection than wheat; and it appeared to him, that the fact of their having borne it, went far to prove that they required it. But the scale proposed by the Government was in reality much lower. Under the existing law, the duty on wheat, when the price was 50*s.* was 1*l.* 16*s.* 8*d.* It is proposed to reduce it to 1*l.* This was a reduction at the rate of 45½ per cent. Barley at 25*s.* of price, was protected by a duty of 1*l.* 4*s.* 4*d.*: it was to be reduced to 11*s.*, being a reduction at the rate of 54¾ per cent.; while oats at a price of 18*s.*, now bearing a duty of 19*s.* 9*d.* was to be reduced to 8*s.*, a reduction of 59½ per cent. Had the duties on these latter grains only been reduced to the same extent as that on wheat, barley would have stood at 13*s.* 3¼*d.*; oats at 10*s.* 9½*d.*, and with that he would have been satisfied. He had called on his right hon. Friend, at the Board of Trade, to press this matter on his consideration; but his right hon. Friend had told him he was quite mistaken, that his calculations were matter of moonshine, and that Parliament never would look at the matter in that point of view. His right hon. Friend said, that he must look at the pivot price, and that as sixteen was to fifty-six the pivot of wheat, so was eight to twenty-eight the pivot of barley, and six to twenty-two the pivot of oats. There was no denying this; but still the fact remained, that while the new protection as compared with the old was on wheat reduced only 45 per cent., on barley it was reduced 54, and on oats 59, or nearly 60 per cent. But, besides this, by the exclusion of Scotland from the averages, they also were made to work against us. The grower of Scotland sold his oats, say, for 18*s.* per quarter, about the present price. At that price, he would be entitled, under the proposed scale, to protection to the extent of 8*s.* But the merchant who takes that grain to London, must sell it as high as 22*s.* or even 23*s.*, to reimburse his expenses of various sorts, excluding altogether, or nearly so, all consideration of profit—it then enters into the formation of the average, which regulates the duty, and the protection is reduced from 8*s.* to 6*s.* or 5*s.* Now, he did not complain of the exclusion of Scotland from the averages—there were sufficient reasons in the Tithe Composition Law to make it difficult and inexpedient to remedy that; but it did afford a reason for giving, to a certain extent, an increased protection. Then farther, the expences of freight, &c., were not the only deduction to be made from the profit of the Scotch farmer. In stating them at 4*s.*, or even 5*s.* per quarter he had not exaggerated. His right hon. Friend had himself stated the other night that 2*s.* per quarter was not an over-estimate of the expense to which the English farmer must be put in bringing his corn to market. Now he had received, the other day, a letter from an extensive and very intelligent farmer in the upper district of the county he had the honour to represent, and that gentleman assured him, that on 200 quarters of oats which he sold, to be delivered free at the port of shipping, for 18*s.* per quarter; his expences of carriage, &c. amounted to 35*l.* 1*s.* 4*d.*, or about 3*s.* 6*d.* per quarter, so that the price he really received for his grain did not exceed 14*s.* 6*d.* He would not detain the committee with the details of those expences, but he had received the calculations, which were fairly and moderately stated. The gentleman to whom he alluded, was one of a class numerous in the upland districts of Scotland. He held his farm under lease, relying on the protection which the law now afforded, he had largely, and with great benefit to the district in which he resided, invested his capital in reclaiming and bringing under cultivation about 100 acres of new land. Every one knows that the grain produced on new land is, for the first years, of soft and inferior quality, and it is to the produce of the last years of his lease that the farmer looks for his return. Surely, then, it would be unjust so to alter the law as to compel him to abandon the cultivation of that land. It was no consolation to tell him that from climate and situation his land was unfitted for cultivation, and that he should turn it to pasture. Every one practically acquainted with such land, and he had himself a good deal of not very profitable experience, knew that it would not carry pasture, at least not till it had gone through three or four 5-shift rotations. He did not however, pretend to plead for him a continuance of his present protection. All he asked for him was, such an increase on the proposed scale, as would secure him from ruinous loss. And he did not ask it for him alone, but also for that numerous class of agricultural labourers who found in his improvements a constant and profitable employment. Last year he (Mr. C. Bruce) had served on a Committee to inquire into the destitution in the highlands; the committee of which his hon. Friend, the Member for Invernessshire was chairman, found that great distress, arising from want of employment, existed. In ascertaining the numbers of the unemployed, it was proposed to enquire into the state of the district round Inverness. He had opposed that enquiry, because he knew that every man disposed to handle a pick and a spade could then find employment in reclaiming waste land. He trusted that the Government would yet well consider the effect of the proposed change in the law, lest by arresting such operations you added to the number, already so lamentably great of those suffering for want of employment. With regard to barley, now more immediately under their consideration, though he had thought it better at once to discuss the whole protection proposed for spring corn. He would not long detain the Committee. On it also he considered the proposed protection inadequate. Much would depend on the accuracy of the returns as to the quantity which might be expected to come into competition with the home grower. From the abstract of the consular returns it appeared, that 852,566 quarters might be now expected if the ports were opened at a moderate duty; and, as regarded the probable and speedy future increase of that quantity, the very important answer from Elsinore was "Yes," that without much difficulty, and in a short space of time, it might be materially increased. The fact he believed to be, that under favouring circumstances, the greater part of the Danish barley, which now goes to be used in distillation to Norway, would find its way to England; 850,000 quarters, therefore, he considered a very imperfect estimate of the quantity we might expect. Indeed, he attached very little to such estimates. He did not wish to say anything disrespectful of Mr. Meek, who, he doubted not, had done his duty honestly and with ability under all the circumstances—but at a former period Mr. Jacob, who was also a great authority on such matters, had informed Mr. Huskisson that not more than 500,000 quarters of wheat could be sent to this country from abroad; yet when three months afterwards, the ports were opened, three times that amount, or 1,500,000 quarters were poured in. If Mr. Jacob was mistaken then, so Mr. Meek might be now. Indeed, mistakes and omissions were manifest on the face of the returns. For instance, it was stated, that only 150,000 quarters might be expected from Odessa. Now, he was assured that four or five times that amount were exported annually from the port of Odessa. Then as to omissions; Riga was entirely unnoticed—and yet in 1827-8, some six or 700,000 quarters of oats had been imported from Riga alone; yet Riga was omitted altogether, and the whole quantity of oats which it was stated we could expect from the whole continent was only 808,000 quarters. He could cite other instances for the reports, but these were sufficient to show that they could not be altogether relied on. And as the quantities were under-stated, so he believed the prices to be over-stated, the fact was, that with a constant trade, such as we should have under the proposed scale, prices abroad would rise when we required their corn, and fall to a very low figure when, from abundant harvests at home, we did not require it; and it would then be flooded into this country at prices ruinously low, and from which your proposed duty would give no adequate protection. He was aware that it was asserted that the home grower would have a monopoly, or nearly so, of the finer qualities of this grain, because foreign barley, it was said, was not fit for malting. But besides that, it would displace our inferior barley, used for other purposes, and of which he regretted to say that there was at present too much,—the selling price in Kincardineshire being from 14*s.* to 16*s.*; besides this, it was a mistake to suppose that foreign barley was now unfit for malting. He was assured, that it was so improved in quality of late years, that if not long in store before being sent over, it will malt as well as our own. Formerly, that imported was very inferior, seldom weighing more than 48lbs. per bushel, very little reached 50lbs.; now, it frequently weighs from 52 to 56lbs. An extensive corn merchant, on the east coast of Scotland, informed him, that last year he had imported a considerable quantity from Holstein, weighing upwards of 56lbs.; and when the trade is regular, as it would be, under a duty considerably higher than under the proposed scale, it will come direct from the shipping ports as delivered by the grower, and will be as fit for malting as our own. It will so come, as it has come, at freights somewhat lower than was paid by the same house for barley, sent to London from the north-east ports of Scotland. It would not be difficult to prove, that in his statements of the average amount of charge for freight, and other expenses, incident to foreign grain of all kinds, considered as an addition to the protection of the English grower, Mr. Meek has considerably over-rated them. He would not, however, detain the Committee on that point. It was admitted, that whatever was the amount, grain from Scotland was liable to equal or greater charges. There was one other spring-crop on which he wished to address a word to the Committee; beans formed an important crop in the rotation, followed on the richer lands in Scotland. In the carses of Stirling, Falkirk, parts of Perthshire, and other countries, the bean-crop is an essential crop in the preparation for wheat. Now, he would not be accused of an over-statement, if he said, that 38*s.* per quarter was not more than a remunerating price for beans —the highest duty now proposed on them was 11*s.* 6*d.* Last year, an old friend of his, the Pasha of Egypt, contracted to send to this country 50,000 quarters of beans, freight, and all charges included, for 16*s.* per quarter; add to this insurance at 6*d.*, and your highest duty of 11*s.* 6*d.*, and you had them here at 28*s.* per quarter. At such a price all competition was totally out of the question; you make a law against their cultivation, as effectual as the law against the cultivation of tobacco. He had been in the country, and asserted, that there was no limit to the quantity which Egypt might supply, so long as the Nile continued to furnish manure to the Egyptian cultivator, free of all cost and trouble. He did not wish to trespass longer on the time of the Committee, notwithstanding the warning held out to him the other night, by his right hon. Friend, to take warning from the treatment which, as exemplified towards his hon. Friend, the Member for Lincolnshire, skirmishers from his side of the House might expect to receive from hon. Gentlemen opposite. He had ventured, following his instincts as a Highlander, to act among the irregular troops attached to the force of his right hon. Friend. He had acted, however, as an isolated Bidette, and if the information which he conveyed to his right hon. Friend did not induce him to change his position for what he (Mr. Cumming Bruce) thought a better, and advance to the support of his Picquets from Norfolk and Ireland; if they should resolve to maintain their post, and in so doing, fall into the hands of the enemy, he would endeavour not to share their fate; but to fall back alone on the main body of the army. He had no thoughts of deserting to the enemy. If, indeed, the Government of his right hon. Friend were composed of the same squeezable materials as that which preceded it, he might have been tempted to use such a threat; but, thank God, the days of squeezable Governments, as one of their own supporters had termed them, were past; and what he could not obtain from the convictions of the Government, he well knew, that he could never extort from their fears. To their convictions, then, he addressed himself. He believed the protection of the Government insufficient—he believed it would lower the value of land in Scotland 25 per cent., and thus inflict a serious loss on the proprietors, but not till it had inflicted a much more serious loss on the farmers holding, as they all did, under lease. Doubtless, the rents would fall, but not, in many instances, till the leaseholders' means were exhausted; for, unhappily in that country, many estates were held under trusts, which would prevent the proprietors, even if so disposed, from voluntarily lowering the rents; many more were so affected by debts and family provisions, as to leave little in the landlord's power, if he would continue to meet his engagements. Doubtless, where the power existed, the inclination to relieve the tenants would not be wanting among the proprietors of Scotland; but a higher protection was required by both, and he trusted the Government would pause before they absolutely refused it? He could not conclude, however, without saying, that if the proposed scale was adhered to, and if, from it, the bad effects which he anticipated did result, they would have this conviction, and this consolation, that it had been persevered in in no unfriendly spirit—that it had been enacted under the persuasion that no injurious consequences would follow—that the agriculturists had not been intentionally sacrificed to the clamour of any section of their fellow-countrymen, and that a sincere desire to ensure their safety, and promote their eventual prosperity, had been the motive and the object of the Ministers of the Crown.

Lord *Worsley* said, that an hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. C. Bruce) had stated that he thought the proposed amount of protection to the growers of barley was insufficient, but as the measure came from an honest Government, sooner than displace that Government, he would withdraw his opposition to the proposal. Now he was ready to admit the good intentions of the Government, but at the same time he should say that they were mistaken in thinking that the protection they proposed to give would be sufficient. He should say from communications he had had with intelligent farmers of different political opinions, that the whole body seemed to be unanimously of opinion that the existing protection was not too great to the home grower of barley; and they did not think it possible they would continue to cultivate their land for that crop with a less protection. A friend of his had lately told him, that in consequence of the proposition of the Government, only 22*s.* had during the last week been offered for barley in his part of the country, and the maltsters stated that if that proposition were carried, they would get the greater part of their barley from abroad. It must be recollected that none but the finest barleys were included in the averages. There was a very great quantity which was sold at an inferior price, which was not included. As far as he had been able to ascertain with respect to his own country there was but one opinion on this subject. As regarded the alteration in the duty on the importation of foreign wheat the common expression was, that they must grin and bear it; but he trusted that the case was not so hopeless with respect to barley. He feared that if these resolutions passed there would be agricultural distress added to manufacturing distress. That number of persons who now cultivated land would be thrown out of employment and find no other means of obtaining a subsistence. If the forms of the House had permitted, he should have moved that the duties with regard to spring corn should remain as they were at present. From that, however, he was precluded by the decision upon the motion of his hon. Colleague. But with respect to the duties on barley and oats he could not see why any change whatever should have been proposed. As he had stated before, he regretted extremely that the measure had been brought forward. He gave the Government credit for believing that it would afford sufficient protection, and that it would be a settlement of the question; at the same time he differed from them in opinion, and should feel it his duty to offer every opposition to its passing into a law.

Mr. *Christmas* was quite aware that any Gentleman on that side of the House who engaged in a skirmish against her Majesty's Government, was placed in no enviable position. He wished, however, to call the attention of the House to the state of this question as regarded Ireland. A vast deal of alarm existed in that country in reference to the proposed change. He had that day presented a petition, not from the monopolising agriculturists as they were often called, but from the Chamber of Commerce of the city, which he had the honour to represent, praying for an increase of the duty upon oats and barley. Oats were not generally grown in England, but in Ireland. This crop employed a greater number of the population, who supplied this country, as might be inferred from the fact that, while England imported from 1828 to 1841, 3,988,969 quarters of foreign oats, she imported nearly 12,000,000 quarters of foreign wheat. The withdrawal of the protection for oats from Ireland would increase the 1,500,000 unemployed persons to 2,000,000 or 3,000,000, so that the workhouses could not hold them. And it should be borne in mind that in Ireland there were no manufactures to fall back on as here. Since the passing of the present act, there had been imported into this country from Ireland 27,914,039 quarters of oats, valued at nearly 30,000,000*l.* It would, therefore evidently be dangerous to throw this kind of grain out of cultivation, for most certainly the foreigner could beat the Irish oats out of the market, under the proposed scale—a result that she more particularly avoided, considering that Ireland had now the burden of poors'-rate, for the first time, thrown upon her. The three places on the continent, from which the largest importation of oats might be expected, were Petersburgh, Elsinore, and Hamburgh. The price at Petersburgh was from 12*s.* to 14*s.*; at Elsinore, from 12*s.* to 16*s.*; and at Hamburgh, from 14*s.* to 16*s.*; so that they might consider the average price to be 13*s.* a quarter. To this they would have to add 2*s.* a quarter for freight; and that, with a duty of 6*s.*, foreign oats could be brought into the British market at 21*s.* a quarter. The price of oats was also always lower in Ireland than it was in England; and, therefore, he thought he was justified in saying that the proposed scale did not afford sufficient protection to the Irish grower. He should be sorry to do anything to obstruct the proposed measure of which, as a whole, he approved. As for himself, he had no objection to a fixed duty, provided it were sufficiently high, but it ought to be much higher than the one proposed by the noble Lord. He hoped the Government would take into their consideration the particular circumstances of the case as regarded Ireland, and shape their legislation accordingly. He felt a difficulty in voting on the motion of the hon. Member, because he did not understand the effect it might produce. If it would induce the Government to reconsider the question as far as related to oats, he should not hesitate to vote for it. Under the present circumstances, he scarcely knew how he should vote on the motion.

Mr. *Christopher* said, that if the motion before the committee could lead to any practical result, and induce the Government to increase the protective duty on barley and oats, he should feel great satisfaction in supporting it. He agreed in a great deal that had fallen from his noble Friend and Colleague (Lord Worsley) with respect to the inadequate protection which the Government scale would afford to the barley grower; but the practical question for them to consider was, whether they could obtain any additional protection to the barley grower by supporting the motion of the hon. Member for Norfolk. He certainly concurred in what had been urged by the hon. Member for Elginshire. He believed, that if the scale should be adopted without alteration, the cultivators of the strong clay lands, and the growers of beans would suffer materially. Within the last few years large quantities of beans had been imported from Egypt at a low price, and unless the scale upon the lower kinds of grain should be raised, he feared that the agriculturists would be unable to pay their labourers as good wages as they always wished them to receive. There was nothing in the state of the market as regarded barley and oats which called for a reduction of duty. In the midland counties good malting barley could be bought for from 22*s.* to 24*s.*, and oats for from 17*s.* to 20*s.* If by supporting the motion of his hon. Friend, he could induce the Government to alter their intentions, and impose a higher protective duty upon the minor sorts of grain, he would vote for it; but knowing that the motion could not possibly lead to any practical result, and believing, that the sooner the matter under consideration was settled, one way or the other, the more satisfactory it would be to the country, he would strongly recommend his hon. Friend not to press his motion to a division.

Mr. *Shaw* said, that a considerable degree of excitement prevailed in Ireland upon the subject of the proposed scales of duties upon oats. It was undoubtedly the general opinion, that the degree of protection afforded by that scale was inefficient. The feeling upon this point might, perhaps, be exaggerated; but he believed, that it was not altogether groundless. His object in rising was to elicit some explanation from the right hon., the Vice-President of the Board of Trade. In framing the scale of duties for oats, Government had proceeded upon the assumption, that 22*s.* per quarter was a sufficient price for the protection of the home-grower. The Government likewise arrived at that conclusion on the assumption of another fact, the accuracy of which he was disposed to dispute—namely, that foreign oats could not be brought into the English market under the price of 16*s.* per quarter. If it could be shown, that foreign oats could be sold for less than 16*s.*, the Government must admit, that there was some mistake in their calculation; if, on the contrary, they could show their calculation was correct, he should be compelled to acknowledge that the agriculturists ought to be satisfied. He had that very day been informed that Swedish oats could be bought at Hamburg for 9*s.* per quarter, and the freight from Hamburg was only 2*s.* 6*d.* An hon. Member opposite had also informed him that he could obtain any quantity of oats he pleased at Elsinore, at 12*s.* per quarter. Hamburg and Elsinore were the two places from which we always obtained our principal supplies of oats, and he could not help thinking that there was some mistake in the information contained in Mr. Meek's report as regarded both those places. In that report was the following question and answer respecting the price of oats at Elsinore :—

"What would be the average price free on board per imperial quarter of oats ?—It would be from 12*s.* to 15*s.*"

In another part of Mr. Meek's report he found, under the head Elsinore, the following passage :—

"The prices of corn per quarter paid in the interior are scarcely to be ascertained with any degree of accuracy. They vary considerably, almost each province, and even each town, delivering a different quality of grain. The prices that have been paid in the provinces during these latter years, so far as the same can be ascertained, appear not to have exceeded the following:—Oats, 8*s.* 6*d.* to 10*s.* 6*d.*"

There was a material difference between the two statements. There was also some mistake apparent in the statement with respect to Hamburg. He understood, that the vessels engaged in the coal-trade between Newcastle and Hamburg were in the habit of bringing corn to this country at the rate of 1*s.* 6*d.* per quarter. This was confirmed by what he found in page 40 of Mr. Meek's report. The question was asked,

"What are the present rates of freight from Hamburg to the various parts of the United Kingdom ?"

The answer was,

"Corn is 1*s.* 6*d.* to 2*s.* per quarter to the east coast."

And yet, in the consuls' returns, the average cost of freight was stated to be from 2*s.* 6*d.* to 5*s.* So large a margin was left between the two figures, that it was impossible to come to any satisfactory conclusion on the subject. The same observation would apply to the assigned average price of oats at Hamburgh, which was stated to be from 11*s.* to 16*s.* In 1829, when the price of oats in this country was 25*s.* 11*d.*, no less than 189,876 quarters of foreign oats were brought into home consumption. The average duty that year was 11*s.*, and deducting that from 25*s.* 11*d.*, there would be 14*s.* 11*d.* left as the price at which foreign oats could be introduced, and at that price he believed the home grower would be undersold in the market. It appeared, that during last year, two millions and a half quarters of oats were imported from Ireland into this country, and from the rest of the world only 500,000 quarters. There were ten thousand vessels, and those principally of small burthen, engaged in the trade between Ireland and this country. This was not a state of things which ought to be disturbed upon light grounds. Agriculture had greatly improved in Ireland within the last few years. The country, generally, was improving. A Poor-law had been recently established. Was not this, then, an inconvenient time for making an experiment upon the staple trade of the country? He entreated hon. Members opposite, who expressed so much sympathy for the distressed manufacturers, to remember that agriculture furnished the sole means of employment for the eight millions of Irish population. Of late years, the Irish agriculturists had found it more advantageous to cultivate oats than any other kind of grain, and if anything should be done seriously to affect that branch of industry, the most calamitous disasters might be expected to ensue. He entreated the Government to pause before they determined on adhering to their scale with respect to oats. He thought, that justice would be done by raising the duty 2*s.*

Mr. *C. Buller* said, that hon. Members opposite seemed to be puzzled as to what course they should pursue on the present occasion, and the hon. Member for Norfolk proposed to stop the business of the House, in order, he supposed, to enable the country gentlemen to collect their ideas. He knew not how long a time that operation might occupy ; but he ventured to suggest that it would be better not to waste the time of the House for such a purpose. As the question stood, he could pursue no other course except that of voting with the Government, for he could not lend himself in any way to a raising of the duty. The motion, if carried, could have no other effect than that of uselessly postponing the settlement of an important question. He could not, however, help expressing his surprise at the course pursued by the agricultural Members. The hon. Member for Lincolnshire said, it was no use trying to do anything against the Government; but that courageous nobleman, the Duke of Buckingham, said, that nothing was ever got without trying. The farmers would, he feared, be disappointed at the course their friends were pursuing. Why did not the agricultural Members follow the example of the noble Duke, pluck up a little courage and try.

Mr. *Wodehouse* said, that his main object was to obtain some explanation with respect to the admission of foreign malt, and he could only say that he retained his opinion that the proposed protection in reference to barley and oats would be inadequate. Wheat might be a fit subject for revenue, but he did not think there was a necessity for rendering the rule respecting wheat in reference to revenue applicable to other kinds of grain. The tendency of the proposed scale respecting barley and oats would be to exhaust the minor soils, and this was a point the importance of which, though the hon. and learned Member for Liskeard might not be aware of, yet agriculturists well understood. He would not, however, put the committee to the trouble of a division.

Mr. *G. Palmer* said, that hon. Gentlemen on his side of the House were not to be cried down by ridiculous and unseemly observations. He thought the Government ought to reconsider those duties, or, at all events, afford such reasonable time as would enable hon. Gentlemen to ascertain what was likely to be their effect. The right hon. Baronet should pay as much attention to the objections of the agricultural interest as he had done to those urged from the other side of the House. To show that the proposed protection would not be sufficient, he had only to say that at present the price of oats at Hamburgh was no more than 11*s.* 6*d.* the quarter, and the charge for freight only 3*s.*

Motion withdrawn, and the scale of duties relating to barley agreed to, for which see *ante*, page 237.

Mr. *Gladstone* said, that notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, barley and oats being so closely allied, it would be convenient at once to proceed with the consideration of the subject of the scale of duties applicable to oats.

The *Chairman* then put the question, that whenever the average price of oats was 18*s.* and under 19*s.* the quarter, the duty shall be for every quarter 8*s.*

Mr. *W. S. O'Brien* was understood to contend that the effect of the Government plan would be to prevent the Irish farmer from obtaining fair remuneration for his oats. It was quite manifest that the proposed scale of duties would enable foreign oats to compete with Irish oats in the markets of this country, and he thought as large a protection should be given to oats as had been given to wheat. When the price of oats was 20*s.* foreign oats could be sold at a profit, notwithstanding a duty of 6*s.*, and he therefore thought it would have been better if the right hon. Baronet had excluded foreign oats until a price of 23*s.* had been attained. From the statements of Mr. M'Gregor, it appeared that oats could be shipped at ports in the north of Europe at an average of 9*s.* the quarter, a high average; whereas the cost price in Ireland was 13*s.* or 14*s.* The Irish farmer, therefore, would not receive more than 7*d.* or 7½*d.* a stone for oats under the new system although by the present he got 10*d.* or 1*s.* In 1837 the quantity of oats imported from Ireland at a duty of 6*s.* was 826,270 quarters, and in 1839, 855,000, so that not only would Ireland lose the advantage of the markets of this country, but thousands of acres of land in that country would be thrown out of cultivation. He had thought it right to remonstrate with the right hon. Baronet, as to the effect which his scale of duties for oats would be calculated to produce upon the condition of the Irish producers, and he called upon hon. Members at both sides of the House to support him in protecting the interests of so considerable a class of Irish agriculturists.

Sir *D. Roche* was opposed to the proposition of the right hon. Baronet, as regarded the duty on oats, for he did not believe that it would afford sufficient protection to the Irish grower. As an instance of the opinion which was held by those best acquainted with the subject, he would call attention to the fact, that a great fall had taken place in the price of oats since the proposal of the right hon. Baronet had been given to the public, whilst no corresponding reduction had taken place in the price of wheat. Feeling, as he did, that those who were engaged in the production of oats in Ireland would suffer if the plan of the right hon. Baronet were carried into effect, he hoped that the portion of the proposition which referred to oats would be reconsidered.

Sir *R. Bateson* congratulated Gentlemen on his side of the House for the conversion which had taken place on the opposite side of the House. It appeared that an hon. Gentleman opposite thought the protection to oats was rather too low, although, if he (Sir R. Bateson) mistook not, that hon. Gentleman had voted a few nights ago against a similarly proportioned duty for wheat. He could assure the House that there was a general feeling throughout Ireland amongst the landowners, the farmers, and the merchants, to the effect that the rates of duty proposed for oats would be quite insufficient to afford protection to the growers of oats. It would not permit the Irish producers to enter into a competition with the producers of foreign grain in the London market. However, he saw no chance of at present obtaining a higher rate of duty; and, approving as he did of the other portions of the plan of the right hon. Baronet, he could only express his regret that the duty had not been fixed at a higher scale, and to hope that at some other period the question would be taken into consideration.

Mr. *W. O. Stanley* believed the scale of the right hon. Baronet would be quite satisfactory to the constituency which he had the honour to represent.

Mr. *Redington* had voted against the total repeal of the Corn-laws, but was not therefore bound to agree to every detail of the measure brought forward by the right hon. Baronet. He claimed a fair proportion of protection for Ireland as well as for England, but he had no partial motive in making that claim. He was of the same opinion which Lord Coke had expressed many years ago—that the prosperity of both countries would be best promoted by attending to the interests of each. While, however, he opposed the repeal of the Corn-laws, he thought it could be shown—indeed it had been shown—that they could be altered without danger to the agriculturists, and with advantage to the manufacturers. He denied that he ever voted for the protection of 3*s.* 4*d.* offered by the noble Lord, for this simple reason, that there had been no opportunity either to vote for it or to discuss it. He congratulated the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth on being one of the most successful missionaries ever sent amongst a people afflicted with blindness and error. He had succeeded in making many converts, but there was one obstinate, or rather courageous nobleman, who still loved to remain in blindness and superstition, notwithstanding all the attempts of the right hon. Baronet to enlighten him. As to the arguments used by persons of different feelings from that nobleman, that there should be no tax at all on bread, he should not be surprised, if that were pressed for, to see some agricultural Members of the House, more eager and adventurous than the hon. Member for North Lincolnshire, rise up and move that the burdens which encumber land should be altogether removed. At the same time, he confessed that he had heard one of the most unsatisfactory reasons possible from a right hon. Gentleman in that House, for maintaining the Corn-laws—that they were necessary to support the aristocracy in their present position. He would oppose in every way the measure of the right hon. Baronet, as long as it was not calculated to afford adequate protection to Ireland. He was opposed to the present fluctuating scale, by which, if he understood it properly, the reduction of the duty upon oats at 22*s.* was to be in relation to the duty on wheat at 56*s.* The old duty, when wheat was at 56*s.*, was 30*s.* 8*d.*; by the new duty it would be 16*s.* So that when oats were at 22*s.* the old duty was 13*s.* 9*d.* Arguing the same way, the new duty ought not to be 6*s.* on the oats, but 7*s.* 2½*d.* Sinking the 2½*d.* it ought to be 7*s.* That was a difference of a shilling only, it was true, but still it was a difference. He thought the price 22*s.* ought to be at the middle of the scale, and that the right hon. Baronet had not treated oats in the same way that he had corn. Should oats be reduced in the same ratio as wheat, at the price of 22*s.* the scale would be a shilling too low. Therefore he should propose that at the price of 20*s.* the figure 7*s.* be left out, for the purpose of substituting 8*s.* eventually.

Mr. *Gladstone* would endeavour to go over the principal points which had been touched on in the speeches of hon. Members on either side of the House during that debate, and he thought he should be able to show, that the proposition of her Majesty's Government embraced a scale in due, and indeed exact proportion to the existing law. The scale maintained, he would contend, the same proportion in all its essential points, as regarded wheat, on the one hand, and oats and barley, on the other, which was in operation under the existing law. It was true, that if an arbitrary point were assumed in the present scale, there might be a variation in the proportions discovered at that particular point; and it was from the assumption of arbitrary points, instead of paying regard to the cardinal points of the existing law, that hon. Gentleman had been led to object to the proposal of her Majesty's Government as not corresponding with the relations of the present law. An hon. Gentleman opposite had stated, that he thought the duty on oats at 22*s*., ought to be 1*s*. higher than that proposed by the Government, and another hon. Member had stated, that instead of 22*s*., 23*s*. ought to be substituted, so that there was a very small divergence, and that arose from hon. Gentlemen not having taken pains enough to examine the principle on which the structure of the present scale had been based. An hon. Gentleman opposite had remarked, that at a certain point of the scale, the duty on oats was lower proportionally than it was on wheat, but it could be shown, by referring to the other end of the scale, that the same duty was proportionally somewhat higher, as the ascent and descent was to be by integrals, and could not conveniently be by fractions, it was obvious that there could not be a precise correspondence at every point, the same differential being applied to different quantities. But on the whole, the balance, he believed, was accurately struck. The hon. Gentleman had also said, that 56*s*. had been fixed on as a remunerating price for wheat. Now, he did not apply that precise term, but he should say, that 56*s*. was a price up to which such protection would be given by the proposed bill as, under ordinary circumstances, would permit only a limited entry of foreign grain into the market, and the corresponding prices of oats and barley bore the same relation to wheat under that bill, that they bore under the present system. He should first show the House, that the relations which oats and barley bore to wheat in the existing scale, were higher than those that had been in operation previous to the existing law. In 1663, the proportion which oats bore to wheat was as 27 to 100; in 1774, the proportion was 33 to 100; in 1822, it was raised from 33 to 35; and in 1838, from 35 to 40; and at 40, it was now proposed to continue it. In 1774, and for a long time subsequently, barley was taken at half the value of wheat, namely, 50 to 100. In 1828, it was taken at 53 to 100, and at that point it was proposed to retain it. It had been said, that the duty on oats at 22*s*., ought to be in the same proportion to the price as the duty on wheat at 56*s*., bore to the price at 56*s*. under the old scale; but it should be recollected, that under the old scale, the duty at 56*s*. was merely attached to that price, as it happened to fall upon it in the course of the descent of the scale; but 56*s*. was not there chosen on any principle, or with any particular view. If 16*s*. were assumed as the duty when wheat was 56*s*., in order to prevent any very extensive importation of foreign wheat, then it was not a similar case, in comparing the duty on oats, to look at 56*s*. under the old duty, which was not a price chosen or selected on any principle, as it was under the proposed scale. The scale was constructed on the principle of maintaining the same relation between the amount of protection afforded to wheat, and that afforded to barley and oats, as that of the law of 1828. On this principle it was, that 6*s*. was considered the duty that ought to be placed on oats when at 22*s*.; since 22*s*. is assumed to be a price for oats as good as 56*s*. for wheat; it corresponds with 56*s*. as in the law of 1828, 25*s*, corresponds with 62*s*., rejecting a fraction; and the duty of 6*s*. at 22*s*., bears the same relation to the duty of 16*s*. at 56*s*., as the duty of 9*s*. 3*d*. at 25*s*. on oats, in the law of 1828, bore to the duty of 24*s*. 8*d*. at 62*s*. on wheat, in the same law. The rule had been applied with as much arithmetical precision, as the nature of a graduated scale would admit, and it must also be remembered, that this was a higher relation of duty than oats had ever borne to wheat in any corn bill before the year 1828. The same principle had been acted on with regard to the duty on barley. It was very natural, that hon. Members who represented constituencies that were particularly interested in the cultivation of barley and oats, should stand out for a higher protection than that proposed to be afforded, and to insist that the proposed scale did not afford protection enough. But he, on the other hand, was called upon to show, and was fully confident of being able to convince the House, that the scale proposed by the Government afforded as fair a protection to one kind of grain as to another. He was glad to avail himself of the testimony that had been borne by the hon. Member for Anglesey (Mr. W. O. Stanley). That hon. Member had stated, though his constituents were not the most favourably circumstanced with regard to markets, that their belief was, that the protection afforded to barley and oats was a fair and efficient protection. Recollecting the number of Gentlemen in the House connected with constituencies, who were interested in the cultivation of barley and oats, and recollecting the small number of those Gentlemen who objected to the proposed scale, he might take that acquiescence as a proof that those Gentlemen were convinced that the protection afforded to these grains was a fair protection; and if that was not their opinion, the debate on that point would have been much more protracted. His right hon. Friend, at the head of the Government, had observed at the commencement of the debate, on the question generally, that in apportioning the relative amount of duty on the different kinds of grain, several circumstances ought to be taken into consideration. They should recollect, that the cost of conveyance on oats and barley was higher on the former than on the latter, in proportion to the difference of price. The cost of conveyance was very much proportioned to the bulk of the articles, and thus it afforded an additional protection to barley and oats as compared with the more valuable article of wheat which, of course, would bear the charge better. And besides that, the value of the article was to be taken into consideration; he might allude to the admission which had been made by the hon. Member himself, who moved the amendment, the Member for Norfolk, who fairly avowed that the generality of foreign barley was not fit for the purposes of malting. He believed, that the fact of a general inferiority in quality, would be equally admitted with respect to oats. He did not mean to say, that some of the continental countries, where oats were cultivated, did not produce oats as good as the average of our own. He might mention the Dutch oats, and the oats grown in some parts of Denmark. But he believed, that limiting the proposition by these exceptions, the generality of oats grown on the continent was inferior to the oats grown in this country. Now, if that was the case, they must make some allowance for that fact, in determining the protection required. He would now come to the important consideration which had been pointed out the other evening by the hon. Member for Halifax, namely, the price at which they might expect not particular parcels, but large quantities of grain to be landed in this country from foreign parts. With respect to this part of the subject, he would refer, in succession, to some statements that had been made by hon. Members at both sides, by his right hon. Friend, the Recorder of Dublin, and other Gentlemen who had addressed the committee. The representations made by these hon. Members must invariably be taken in this sense, that they brought forward the best case in favour of that particular class of agriculturists which their zeal and industry could produce. Well, then, before referring to the official accounts on the Table of the House, let them try the case by what had been stated by his right hon. Friend behind him. In the first place, his right hon. Friend, the Recorder of Dublin, had stated, that in 1829, 190,000 quarters of oats were taken out of bond at an average duty of 11*s.* the quarter, the average price in the market being at the time 22*s.* 9*d.* per quarter. Now, assuming this to be the average price, it would leave the cost to the importer at something under 12*s.* per quarter. This, he believed, was about the lowest average that could be quoted. But the returns before the House showed, that in the year referred to there were 555,000 quarters of oats imported. Now, the fact that of this quantity only 190,000 quarters were entered for consumption, showed that it could not have been a very good mercantile transaction, and that the grain must have been sold either at a small profit, or probably at no profit at all. For it appeared from this statement, that of the quantity of oats imported, only one-third was brought into the market. He must likewise remark, that 190,000 quarters of oats sounded in that House as a very large quantity; but any one who formed the smallest estimate of the entire consumption of the country, must see at once that such a quantity as 190,000 quarters could not exercise any influence upon the general price. To take the general consumption of the United Kingdom at 15,000,000 quarters was to take a very moderate estimate, and it was quite clear, that 190,000 or about the one-seventy-fifth, or the one-eightieth part of that quantity, could not influence the price —the effect of such a quantity could not be felt in the market. Another case had been mentioned by the hon. Member for

Limerick, who stated, that in 1837, the quantity of oats imported was 334,000 quarters; and the hon. Member somewhat skilfully observed, that the average price of the whole year was only 21*s.* 9*d.* per quarter. It was fortunate, that the returns of the average duty paid would point to what the average price exactly was at the period of the operation in question.. The hon. Member would find from the returns, that in three months specified in that year—namely, the months of July, August, and September, he would find that 9*s.* 11*d.* was the average duty paid on 300,000 quarters, or about nine-tenths of the whole quantity, and that showed that the price of oats in this country at the time must have been at about 25*s.* per quarter. Well, then taking the price at 25*s.* on 300,000 quarters, that would leave the price to the importer at 15*s.* the quarter; but the whole alarm of the agriculturists at the proposed duty was founded on the apprehension, that oats could be imported at 14*s.*, 13*s.*, or even 12*s.* per quarter. Now, it showed how little grounds there existed for this alarm, when it appeared, that even at this which had been adduced as a period proving the inadequacy of the protection now proposed, 15*s.* a quarter was the price at which oats had been imported—and even then not in such large quantities as could materially influence the general market. His hon. Friend the Member for Essex had stated, in the course of the debate, that in some ports in the north of Europe he could purchase oats at 11*s.* 6*d.* the quarter, and that the freight would be about 3*s.* Now, to this not less than 1*s.* 6*d.* a quarter must be added for the payment of sound duties, metage, and other charges. This would raise the price to about 16*s.*, and adding the duty of 6*s.* the quarter, the oats so imported could not be sold at a price under 22*s.* the quarter. Thus again the reasonableness of the proposal was proved by the statements made for the purpose of impeaching it. He did not doubt but that it might be possible to procure particular parcels of oats at a lower price; but without inquiring into the circumstances of the vendor, and the particular circumstances under which such parcels might be sold, they could not take such instances into their calculation. They should form their conclusions from the price at which this grain could be generally obtained from foreign ports. There was also this additional security with respect to the importation of large quantities lowering the price in the home market; namely, that the demand from this country for large quantities of grain must have the invariable effect of raising the price in the foreign port. There was no effect in nature or art more certainly produced, than that the demand for a large quantity caused a proportionate rise in the price. He would now turn to the official papers which had been laid on the Table of the House. He found, according to the returns from the consuls, that the total quantity of oats produced by Sweden was about 12,000 quarters. Sweden was generally an importing country, and with respect to the productions of all kinds of grain, its capacities were very small. A case had been mentioned where a large quantity of bonded oats was offered for sale in Hull at a very low price. But a case of that kind was very susceptible of explanation. It showed that the vendor could not obtain a good market for his grain, and was content to take a very small price rather than lose the benefit of his importation altogether. He had already stated what no one would dispute, that when there was a large demand the price rose. Now, let them look to the official information before the House. He (Mr. Gladstone), without binding himself to all the details, was very much disposed to rely on the main features of the returns made by the consuls, and on the more recent report of Mr. Meek. The House should recollect that the returns from the consuls had now been before the country for nearly six months, and no respectable parties connected with the trade or commerce of the country had found reason to question their general accuracy. [An hon. *Member:* the case of Tamboff.] Tamboff is not included properly in the official reports of the consuls. The case of Tamboff was mentioned by a consul, who, not satisfied with confining himself to the range prescribed to him, went out of his own proper province, and included a statement respecting Tamboff in his official report, and the result had been the same as it was in most instances where persons were not satisfied to confine themselves to the discharge of their own particular business. With respect to those hon. Members at both sides of the House who were dissatisfied with the duties now under discussion, he relied on the general upshot of the consular returns to convince them that their apprehensions were unfounded. He saw no reason to believe that the returns with respect to barley and oats were entitled to less credit than the returns respecting wheat. He would ask the committee to look at the general effect of these returns, from which it appeared that the price at which large quantities of barley could be obtained from the principal ports of the continent was 18*s.* 2*d*, a quarter, and that the probable quantity to be obtained was 835,000 quarters; then, adding the freight, and other charges, at least 5*s.* more, would raise the cost price, when landed in this country, to 23*s.* 2*d.* When so landed, it would have to pay a duty of 9*s.* a quarter, so that it could not be sold in this market in large quantities at less than 32*s.* per quarter. He did not think that any Gentleman who considered the general scope of the Government plan with respect to protection, would say that this was not a reasonable amount of protection with respect to barley, the average price of which, in the home market, was at present 28*s.* the quarter. Well then, with respect to oats, he found that they could procure 793,000 quarters at an average price of 11*s.* 3*d.* the quarter. To this 5*s.* should be added for the expense of freights which would make the price something above 16*s.*, and adding 6*s.* for duty, would give a total of 22*s.* the quarter. Now he did not think that any hon. Gentleman could reasonably ask a protection beyond this. If they looked to the more recent information furnished by Mr. Meek, they would find still more reason to be convinced. One of his hon. Friends had refered to the price of grain in Denmark, but it was fallacious to take the country prices instead of those in the markets of export. They had been told, that if an Irish grower of oats obtained 20*s.* a quarter in Mark-lane, that at least 6*s.*, or one-third, was to be deducted for the cost of conveyance. But if that was the case, it should surely be recollected that it would still more apply to continental countries from which corn was to be procured. In those countries the roads were in general very bad, the conveyance difficult and inconvenient. On this account the price of grain in the interior of those countries was no test whatever. If they wanted to form an accurate estimate, they must take the prices at the ports where the corn was shipped, or the prices in bond in this country. Well, then, what was the information furnished by Mr. Meek, as to the prices of barley and oats on the continent. In reading these prices, he was not so much afraid of not convincing hon. Gentlemen opposite, that there was not sufficient protection, as he was afraid of creating an impression that there was more protection afforded to barley and oats by the proposed scale than was really in strictness necessary. Mr. Meek stated the price of barley to be as follows:—

At—	Per Quarter.
Ostend	29*s.* 8*d.*
Rotterdam	21*s.* 0*d.*
Bremen	23*s.* 6*d.*
Elsinore	18*s.* 0*d.*

Let them, then, for the sake of the argument take the lowest price quoted, namely, the price at Elsinore of 18*s.* the quarter; and if, to this they added 5*s.* a quarter for necessary expenses, the price would be 23*s.*; and to this they must add 9*s.* duty before it could come into consumption, so that the lowest price at which, according to Mr. Meek, foreign barley could come into our market for consumption would be at 32*s.* the quarter. The return with respect to the price of oats was this:—

At—	Per Quarter.
Ostend	22*s.* 3*d.*
Rotterdam	18*s.* 6*d.*
Bremen	13*s.* 6*d.*
Elsinore	13*s.* 6*d.*

He would again take the lowest price, that at Bremen and Elsinore, namely, 13*s.* 6*d.* to which he could not add less than 4*s.* a quarter for charges, which would raise the price to 17*s.* 6*d.*, and the duty of 6*s.* a quarter would make the lowest price of continental oats, according to present rates abroad, when brought into consumption in our markets 23*s.* 6*d.* per quarter. In a matter of this kind, there was often a difficulty with respect to the precise conclusions to which they should come. All they could do, was to choose the best evidence they could command on the subject, and that was the official evidence which had been submitted to the Government and the House. From that evidence, remaining as it did substantially unquestioned, the conclusion was irresistible, that the protection afforded to oats and barley by the scale of her Majesty Government was adequate and ample, and bore a due and just relation to the duties applied with respect to wheat. With respect to the present price of oats, he believed, that the present average price was something above 19*s.* per quarter. He did not deny, that these low prices were a great grievance to the growers of grain—but it should be recollected that these low prices were by no means the effect of the plan proposed by her Majesty's Government, but entirely owing to the quantity and quality of homegrown corn thrown into our markets. The low price of oats, in particular, was owing to the glutted state of the markets, and was not at all caused by the measure now under discussion. He further believed that the alarm about the future price of oats under the new law was entirely owing to the low price which it bore in the market, whilst no alarm was raised about wheat, because wheat happened to bear a better price in the market. Whenever the price of corn was low in the country, the agricultural interest became naturally alarmed, and that was the cause of the present alarm respecting barley and oats. In like manner, and from a similar cause, in 1821, they thought that the protection they then had was not sufficient. They petitioned Parliament for more protection, and their petition was referred to the committee which sat in the year 1821. The answer of the committee was rational and decisive, " that the allegations of distress on the part of the petitioners were perfectly undeniable, but that protection could not be carried further than monopoly. The law, it would be remembered, was then one of prohibition up to a high point of price." The present prices he thought were very low—oats were now 19*s.* 8*d.*, which was twenty per cent. lower than the average price of the last fourteen years, namely, 23*s.* 9*d.* the quarter. He admitted, that this lowness of price must naturally be felt as a hardship by those engaged in the cultivation of that description of grain; but he thought he had fully shown that the measure proposed by her Majesty's Government could not justly operate in causing or in aggravating that reduction of price. He had now, he trusted, sufficiently fulfilled the object with which he had risen to address the committee, namely, to show that the alleged disproportions in the scale of duties did not exist, and to prove, as he trusted he had fully proved, that the measure proposed by her Majesty's Government, had made a just and fair distribution of protections in the scale of duties with respect to the several description of grain—wheat, barley, and oats.

Mr. *M. J. O'Connell* wished for an explanation why the relative proportion of duty had not been reserved at the maximum and minimum points. Taking the top and bottom of the scale, had the proportions been preserved, the maximum price of oats would have been, not 27*s.* but 29*s.*, and the minimum, not 18*s.* but 20*s.* The right hon. Baronet had said that the trade in oats was the most satisfactorily conducted branch of the corn trade, and that there was not the same overholding of oats, in expectation of the low duty, that was practised in the corn trade. The right hon. Baronet had stated that out of 3,513,000 quarters of foreign oats taken out of bond for home consumption, 248,000 quarters had been entered at the duty of 1*s.* 9*d.*, 695,000 at a duty of 3*s.* 3*d.*, 243,000 at a duty of 4*s.* 9*d.*, and 940,000 quarters, the largest quantity, at the duty of 6*s.* 3*d.*, and yet in a branch of trade, which, according to the right hon. Baronet, was so much better conducted than the other branches, he proposed to make a greater change than in those which were worse conducted. There were also 542,000 quarters entered at 7*s.* 9*d.*, 198,000 at 9*s.* 3*d.*, and 485,000 at 10*s.* 9*d.* This looked like a fair proportion, and yet it was in this branch of the trade that a greater change was proposed than in wheat. The hon. Member for Greenock had said that political partiality was suspected by many to be the cause of the difference being made with respect to an article which was principally grown in Ireland. He did not concur with those who entertained such suspicions; but he had received many communications in which they were expressed. But it was unfortunate that the matter which appeared so irrational was not clearly explained. The right hon. Gentleman (the Vice-President of the Board of Trade), thought that the same proportionate protection would be given to oats and other inferior grain as to barley. But it was a fact that, within the last ten days, since the scale of Government became known, oats had fallen in the Irish markets, while wheat was but little effected. He wished that this might be explained. If hon. Gentlemen thought that a protection should be maintained at all, he was of a contrary opinion; he wished to know why the same protection was not extended to all, and not merely to a part? And why a greater amount of protection should be withdrawn from his constituents than from the other interests affected? With the opinions he entertained, he should not be consistent if he voted for increasing the duty on any kind of corn, having a short time previously voted that the duty should be taken off from all.

One of the reasons why there was an outcry against free-trade among the irrational classes of society was the system of carrying measures with unequal relaxations of duty. He hoped that the right hon. Baronet would either show that he had maintained a due equality in the present instance, or else show some reason for having departed from the principle of equality in the interval that had elapsed from his opening speech to the present moment.

Sir *Robert Peel* said, the hon. Gentleman was not present during the speech of my right hon. Friend the Vice-President of the Board of Trade, the greater part of which was occupied in showing that it was quite impossible to maintain exact arithmetical proportion between the duties on oats and wheat, on account of the proportions of the averages and the duties that apply to them. But my right hon. Friend did prove that the proportions, though not arithmetically correct, were substantially so, and that, really and practically, the same amount of protection was given to oats that was given to wheat. When the hon. Gentleman calls for explanation he ought himself to explain. Is it for him, who voted the other night that all duties now payable on the importation of foreign grain of every kind, whether grain, meal, or flour, should be entirely abandoned—is it for him to say now that the existing law, or any part of it, whether in reference to oats or any other kind of grain, works well? Is it he who quotes that part of my speech in which I alluded to oats? who speaks of its being imported at duties of 10*s.* 9*d.* and 6*s.* 8*d.*? who says that under the existing law a fair and proper system of importation takes place, the article not being, as in the case of wheat, kept waiting for the one shilling duty? Is it for this gentleman to ask me, why I venture to touch so satisfactory a state of things, by which foreign oats were admitted upon a right principle, while the Irish article was protected. Now, Sir, can the hon. Gentleman reconcile those observations with his support of a proposal by which all protection would be done away with?—by which oats would be admitted from Holland, Denmark, Holstein, and every port and place on the continent or elsewhere, to interfere with this, which he looks on as almost the only export of Ireland, which forms a main element of her prosperity. How the hon. Gentleman can look with such minuteness into some difference, which he thinks he discovers in the proportions between the duties proposed on wheat and oats, and declare that Ireland will be ruined because she has not got some sixpence more, which she has a right to claim—how he, who considers oats one of the great elements of her prosperity, should then take the great leap of depriving this produce of all protection whatever—this, Sir, I confess myself unable to comprehend. How he can reconcile it to the understandings of his unreasoning constituents I do not know. The unreasoning and irrational part of the community, who, though they cannot understand his figures, or enter into his arithmetical calculations as to the difference in the duties on oats and wheat, may yet, he thinks, understand his vote that Irish oats shall not be protected at all. I shall not attempt to reason with the hon. Gentleman. The House has been occupied with the subject throughout the evening; but he cannot have heard the speech of my right hon. Friend. When the hon. Gentleman calls for an explanation, I doubt much whether Kerry, if it be an oat-growing constituency, will not ask why last year he voted for a duty of 3*s.* 4*d.* upon oats? [Mr. *M. J. O'Connell* was understood to dissent.] Now, I ask those who have been so lavish in abusing me, and in decrying my proposition on the Corn-laws as an insult to the people of England, how the hon. Gentleman can reconcile his vote with the position he has taken up to-night? We, who ventured to touch these monopolies, have difficult tasks to perform. [*Ironical cheers.*] Yes, but you were all loud in cheering the sentiment that my proposition was an insult to the people of England, but the moment the interests of your own constituencies are touched, then all the outcry is raised on the other side. You then demand explanations for those enactments which touch the protection of Irish oats. Why, one of these Gentlemen, who is loudest in speaking of free-trade, said, on this very subject, all that the people of England have to pay to Ireland, for oats is only 300,000*l.* a year, and are you going to refuse that miserable pittance? Sir, the longer these debates continue, the more the people see that amidst all the difficulties and embarrassments by which the question is encompassed, the course I have taken is just and moderate, and intended to reconcile, as far as possible, those conflicting interests which are affected by the subject under consideration. I have endeavoured to give facility and regularity to commercial intercourse, without doing that which, in my opinion, would have the effect of increasing commercial embarassments by too great a disturbance of the agricultural interests, which would react upon the other interests of the country. I have attempted to do that; and the opposition I meet with now, on the ground that I am depriving domestic produce of legitimate protection, will, I trust, make some of those who have been violent opponents of this measure on the ground that it was an insult to the people, come to the conclusion that, upon the whole, the measure is founded upon just and fair principles. And I firmly believe that practical experience will confirm the impression already existing, and daily gaining ground amongst great portions of the community, that, upon the whole, it is as good a settlement as, under existing circumstances, could be made.

Mr. *O. Gore*, while he agreed with every word that had fallen from the right hon. Baronet on the inconsistency of hon. Gentlemen opposing any duty, and then demanding a higher one, wished to say a few words upon the present subject. He was the representative, not of an Irish but of an English constituency. But, at the time of the passing of the Act of Union, when discussions were taking place upon the subject of duties, one of the greatest statesmen that England ever produced—he meant Mr. Pitt—made these observations upon Irish manufactures:—

> "They have no manufactures but one, namely, agriculture. And Irish agriculture must be protected. Ireland must fall, and be a clog upon this country, unless her agriculture is supported."

He begged to remind the House, that the transit cost of Irish oats coming to England was 1*s.* 6*d.* or 1*s.* 9*d.* a quarter, that it was the main grain produce of that country, that there was a much greater amount of uncultivated land in Ireland than in this country, and that when waste land was reclaimed, oats, and not wheat, were usually grown on it at first. He (Mr. O. Gore), therefore, entreated his right hon. Friend to consider well before he finally made his mind up on the subject. He believed that it was intended that the relative proportions between the duties should be fairly kept in this measure. But for the sake of Wales and other parts of the kingdom, as well as Ireland, he hoped full consideration would be given. He denied that he had held a different opinion at the other side of the House from that which he now supported. He had said that he considered the present scale of duties most effectual, but that if a measure was proposed which he considered an improvement, he should support it, reserving the principle of the sliding scale.

Dr. *Bowring* merely intimated his determination to vote against this part of the right hon. Baronet's proposition, because it implied that the food of the people might conveniently or properly be taxed.

Mr. *F. T. Baring* meant only to trouble the committee with a few words, to explain the reasons upon which he should feel it his duty to give a vote in favour of the right hon. Baronet's proposition. But, before he did so, he must take the liberty of saying that he thought the right hon. Baronet's triumphant tone as applied to his hon. Friend the Member for Kerry, was not quite fair or consistent with reason. He apprehended that it was quite consistent for parties to advocate the principle of a total repeal of the Corn-laws; but that when the House had decided that the principle was one which it would not adopt, and determine in its stead to adopt the principle of a sliding scale, then in committee,it was quite consistent for those who had previously voted for the total repeal to canvass the details of the proposed protection, and to argue that one part of it was not fair or just as compared with other parts of it. That he apprehended was the wish of his hon. Friend. He need not say that he did not agree with him. As he had already stated, it was his intention upon this part of the proposition to vote with the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel). Upon a former occasion he took the opportunity of entering his protest against the scale as proposed to be applied to wheat. But that part of the scale having been decided upon, he apprehended that the question now, as related to barley and oats, was one of proportion. Having fixed the duty on wheat, the question now was, whether the House would allow the same relative proportion of protection to be applied to barley and oats as had always hitherto existed, or whether it would abandon that relative proportion of protection and adopt some different principle, giving an additional protection to barley and oats beyond any that had ever yet been afforded? He could not pretend to speak in the same detail upon this subject that other Gentlemen had done; but having listened attentively to the debate he could not help feeling that it was much the wiser course to keep to the old relative scale, and the old proportion of protection, and not to abandon it for the purpose of introducing a new principle, and giving additional protection to one particular article of agricultural produce.

The committee divided on the question, that whenever the price of oats shall be for every quarter 19*s.* and under 20*s.*, the duty shall be 7*s.* —Ayes 256; Noes 53: Majority 203.

List of the AYES.

Adderley, C. B.
Aglionby, H. A.
Aldam, W.
Alford, Viscount
Allix, J. P.
Antrobus, E.
Arkwright, G.
Astell, W.
Bagge, W.
Bailey, J.
Bailey, J. jun.
Baillie, Col.
Baillie, H. J.
Baird, W.
Barclay, D.
Baring, hon. W. B.
Baring, rt. hon. F. T.
Barrington, Viscount
Baskerville, T. B. M.
Bateson, Sir R.
Beckett, W.
Bell, M.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Bernard, Viscount
Blackburne, J. I.
Bodkin, W. H.
Boldero, H. G.
Borthwick, P.
Botfield, B.
Bradshaw, J.
Bramston, T. W.
Broadley, H.
Broadwood, H.
Brocklehurst, J.
Brotherton, J.
Bruce, Lord E.
Bruen, Col.
Buller, C.
Buller, E.
Buller, Sir J. Y.
Bunbury, T.
Burrell, Sir C. M.
Busfeild, W.
Campbell, A.
Charteris, hon. F.
Chelsea, Viscount
Chetwode, Sir J.
Chute, W. L. W.
Clayton, R. R.
Clerk, Sir G.
Clive, hon. R. H.
Codrington, C. W.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Cole, hon. A. H.
Collett, W. R.
Colvile, C. R.
Compton, H. C.
Connolly, Col.
Copeland, Mr. Ald.
Corry, right hon. H.
Courtenay, Viscount
Crosse, T. B.
Dalrymple, Capt.
Darby, G.
Denison, E. B.
Dickinson, F. H.
Douglas, Sir H.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Douro, Marquis of
Drummond, H. H.
Duncombe, hon. A.
Du Pre, C. G.
East, J. B.
Eaton, R. J.
Ebrington, Viscount
Egerton, W. T.
Eliot, Lord
Emlyn, Viscount
Escott, B.
Estcourt, T. G. B.
Evans, W.
Farnham, E. B.
Fellowes, E.
Feilden, W.
Ferrand, W. B.
Filmer, Sir E.
Fitzroy, Capt.
Fleming, J. W.
Follett, Sir W. W.
Forbes, W.
Forster, M.
Fuller, A. E.
Gaskell, J. Milnes
Gladstone, rt. hn. W. E.
Gordon, hon. Capt.
Gordon, Lord F.
Gore, M.
Goring, C.
Goulburn, rt. hon. H.
Graham, rt. hn. Sir J.
Grant, Sir A. C.
Grimston, Viscount
Hale, R. B.
Halford, H.
Hall, Sir B.
Hamilton, W. J.
Hardinge, right hon. Sir H.
Hardy, J.
Harford, S.
Hawes, B.
Hayes, Sir E.
Hayter, W. G.
Heathcote, Sir W.
Hepburn, Sir T. B.
Hill, Sir R.
Hinde, J. H.
Hindley, C.
Hodgson, F.
Hodgson, R.
Hogg, J. W.
Houldsworth, T.
Holmes, hon. W. A'Ct.
Hope, hon. C.
Hope, A.
Hope, G. W.
Hornby, J.
Hughes, W. B.
Humphery, Mr. Ald.
Hutt, W.
Inglis, Sir R. H.
Irton, S.
Jackson, J. D.
Jermyn, Earl
Johnson, W. G.
Johnstone, Sir J.
Johnstone, H.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G.
Jones, Capt.
Kemble, H.
Knatchbull, right hon. Sir E.
Knight, H. G.
Knight, F. W.
Knightley, Sir C.
Labouchere, rt. hn. H.
Lambton, H.
Law, hon. C. E.
Lawson, A.
Leicester, Earl of
Lennox, Lord A.
Liddell, hon. H. T.
Lincoln, Earl of
Lindsay, H. H.
Litton, E.
Lockhart, W.
Lowther, J. H.
Lyall, G.
Lygon, hon. General
Macaulay, rt. hn. T. B.
Mackenzie, W. F.
MacGeachy, F. A.
Mainwaring, T.
Manners, Lord J.
March, Earl of
Marsham, Viscount
Martin, C. W.
Marton, G.
Master, T. W. C.
Masterman, J.
Maunsell, T. P.
Miles, P. W. S.
Miles, W.
Mitcalfe, H.
Mitchell, T. A.
Mordaunt, Sir J.
Morgan, O.
Morris, D.
Morison, General
Neville, R.
Newry, Viscount
Nicholl, rt. hon. J.
Northland, Viscount
O'Brien, A. S.
Owen, Sir J.
Packe, C. W.
Paget, Lord W.
Pakington, J. S.
Palmer, R.
Palmer, G.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Peel, J.
Philips, M.
Pinney, W.
Plumptre, J. P.
Polhill, F.
Pollock, Sir F.
Powell, Col.
Praed, W. T.
Pringle, A.
Pusey, P.
Rawdon, Col.
Reade, W. M.
Rolleston, Col.
Round, C. G.
Round, J.
Rous, hon. Captain
Rumbold, C. E.
Rushbrooke, Col.
Russell, C.
Russell, J. D. W.
Sanderson, R.
Sandon, Viscount
Scarlett, hon. R. C.
Scott, hon. F.
Scrope, G. P.

Sheppard, T.
Shirley, E. J.
Shirley, E. P.
Smith, A.
Smythe, hon. G.
Smollett, A.
Somerset, Lord G.
Somerton, Viscount
Somerville, Sir W. M.
Sotheron, T. H. S.
Stanley, Lord
Stanley, E.
Stanley, hon. W. O.
Stewart, J.
Stuart. Lord J.
Stuart, W. V.
Stuart, H.
Stock, Mr. Serjeant
Sturt, H. C.
Sutton, hon. H. M.
Taylor, J. A.
Tennent, J. E.
Thompson, Mr. Ald.
Thornhill, G.
Towneley, J.
Turner, E.
Tyrell, Sir J. T.
Vere, Sir C. B.
Vernon, G. H.
Villiers, Viscount
Vivian, J. E.
Waddington, H. S.
Wall, C. B.
Wilson, M.
Winnington, Sir T. E.
Wood, G. W.
Wortley, hon. J.
Wyndham, Col.
Wyndham, W.
Yorke, hon. E. T.
Yorke, H. R.
Young, J.
Young, Sir W.

TELLERS.

Fremantle, Sir T.
Baring H.

List of the NOES.

Acheson, Viscount
Acton, Col.
Archdall, M.
Beresford, Captain
Berkeley, hon. H.
Blackstone, W. S.
Blake, Sir V.
Blewitt, R. J.
Bowring, Dr.
Browne, hon. W.
Brownrigg, J. S.
Burroughes, H. N.
Cayley, E. S.
Chapman, B.
Christmas, W.
Christopher, R. A.
Coote, Sir C. H.
Dawnay, hon. W. H.
Dawson, hon. T. V.
Duncan, G.
Esmonde, Sir T.
Ferguson, Col.
Ferguson, Sir R. A.
Ffolliott, J.
French, F.
Gore, W. R. O.
Gregory, W. H.
Grogan, E.
Hastie, A.
Hatton, Captain V.
Heneage, E.
Henley, J. W.
Johnston, A.
Mackenzie, T.
Martin, J.
Norreys, Lord
O'Conor, Don
Powell, C.
Power, J.
Richards, R.
Roche, Sir D.
Shaw, rt. hon. F.
Sibthorp, Colonel
Somers, J. P.
Taylor, T. E.
Trollope, Sir J.
Turnor, C.
Verner, Colonel
Wawn, J. T.
Westenra, hon. H. R.
Williams, W.
Wodehouse, E.
Worsley, Lord

TELLERS.

O'Brien, W. S.
Redington, T. N.

The scale for oats (for which, see *ante*, p. 237) was agreed to.

The following scale for rye, peas, and beans was also agreed to:—

When the average shall be for every quarter,

	s.		s.	s.	d.
Under	30	the duty shall be		11	6
	30	and under	33	10	6
	33	......	34	9	6
	34	......	35	8	6
	35	......	36	7	6
	36	......	37	6	6
	37	......	38	5	6
	38	......	39	4	6
	39	......	40	3	6
	40	......	41	2	6
	41	......	42	1	6
	42	and upwards		1	0

On the question, that for every barrel of wheat meal and flour, being one hundred and ninety-six pounds, there shall be paid a duty equal in amount to the duty payable on thirty-eight and a half gallons of wheat.

Viscount *Sandon* did not intend to press on the attention of the House more than a simple statement of facts. He was desirous that the interest of the miller should not be unduly affected by the present measure, and that without advantage to any party but the foreign miller, and to the great detriment of many important classes. He was aware that the word "protection" was at a discount with some Members of the House, but he still thought it not too much for the most abstract free trader to admit that it was just that no British manufacturer should be exposed to uncompensated disadvantage in competition with the foreigner. The distinction between the duties on wheat and flour was made in 1828, when it was not expected that a regular trade in corn would be established, and the object was only to open the ports for the admission of foreign corn at times of exigency. The nice calculations in the relative duties on wheat and flour were not then entered upon, as it was not considered that any interest would be materially affected by the quantity of flour introduced under such circumstances. The perishable nature of the article was in itself a protection, under the uncertainty of admission to consumption at moderate duties. But it would be very different under the proposed bill, for there would be always some trade in foreign corn, the duty would never long be an exclusion, and it was necessary to provide for the new state of things in such a manner as that the miller should not be put to disadvantage. Without attempting to define the exact proportions between wheat and flour, which would vary according to the quality of the wheat, and the inducement which the market offers at different times to extract from the raw material more or less of the different products, it would be sufficient to look merely at the returns before the House, to establish the existence of a considerable advantage to the foreigner in bringing his bread stuff to this country in the shape of flour, rather than in that of grain. From the remoter parts of America, for instance, from Chilicote, the American merchant sending flour to this country by way of Montreal would have an advantage amounting to about *5s.* 1¼*d.* upon every 100 bushels of corn sent in the shape of flour over what it would bring if sent in the raw state; and from Warsaw the difference would be equal to *5s.* 8*d.* in favour of the importer of flour. How, then, was it possible that the English manufacturer could compete with the foreign manufacturer, the English with the foreign miller, under such circumstances? There would be also this disadvantage attending the importation of flour rather than grain, that the price of the food used by the poor, made, as it is, very extensively from the seconds, or what is technically called the offal, would be very considerably enhanced in proportion to the price paid for the finer bread by the rich. This is not speculation, but founded on experience. In the year 1831 a state of things existed similar to that which existed during the last four years, and, consequently, foreign corn in every shape was admitted largely to this country. A great portion of it came in flour; and, in consequence, while the English mills were idle, and all those persons subsisting by them unemployed, the price of coarse bread bore a higher relative proportion to that of fine bread than it had ever borne before. The difference in the prices of coarse and fine bread was, in consequence of the importation of flour rather than grain, in May, 1831, as 30 to *5*; that was to say, while the latter was, on an average of the previous three years, only *5* per cent. dearer; the former on the same average for the same period was full 30 per cent. higher. In the presence of so many representatives from the sister country, it was hardly his business to allude to the interests of Ireland as deeply involved in the question; flour being almost the only manufacture of Ireland, and the milling interest almost the only branch of her manufacturing industry. Yet Ireland and her sole manufacture was about to be deprived of that protection under which it had thriven, and left to compete—he would not say without advantage, but to a disadvantage — with the foreign manufacturer. Care should be taken of this. He was, therefore, desirous of impressing on the Government the necessity of looking deeply into the question, before it was finally decided, to see whether there was not an inevitable advantage, from smallness of bulk and consequently lower freight and charges, in importing the raw article, rather than the manufactured; and to give to the miller, and the branch of manufacturing industry which he pursued, such protection, in the shape of a fixed duty on the importation of the barrel of flour over and above the fluctuating duty, as the result of such examination should show to be due to him in compensation for the disadvantage under which he must inevitably labour in competing with the American or the German miller.

Sir *R. Peel*: Sir, I am well aware how powerful and important is the interest that my noble Friend advocates, and how very many persons there are connected with it, ready to urge on the House every protection for that interest. However, Sir, having given the subject the fullest consideration of which I am capable, I cannot reconcile it with my sense of the duty I owe the House and the country, to give to flour a greater protection than that which I have proposed for it in these resolutions. This subject, I remember, was very fully considered by me in 1827. On that occasion, I proposed that 196lbs. of flour should be considered equivalent to five bushels, or forty gallons of wheat. I recollect too, that, on further consideration, finding that this amount of protection was objected to as too high, my Colleagues and I reduced it from forty to thirty-eight and a half gallons. That is what it stands at now; and what it has stood at for several years. And, Sir, if you look at the proportion which wheat bears to flour, I do not think that it will be reckoned an undue protection. With respect to barley and oats, it has been urged that due protection has not been afforded them, but the House has decided the contrary. Now, it is urged that the protection on flour is not sufficient, though I propose that 196lbs. of flour be reckoned equivalent to thirty-eight and a half gallons of wheat, and made to pay duty accordingly. Suppose that we increased the proportion, and, as my noble Friend would seem to suggest, shut out altogether foreign flour. Let us ask ourselves what countries would be most affected by it, and most suffer in consequence? Those in whose fate we feel the most interest, namely, Canada and the United States of America. Putting our own colonies out of the question, however, and referring only to America, I say that, in the first place, the state of our commercial relations with the United States is of such a nature, that if I were to ask the House, in the event of a preference being shown to one foreign nation over another, which nation should have the preference of our market, I believe that no man present would hesitate a single moment in giving it to the United States. If you look, Sir, to the exports from this kingdom to Russia, and compare them with our exports to the United States, no one can fail to see the difference in favour of the United States, and therefore no one can fail to give them the preference, if preference there be any. And, Sir, it is my firm conviction, that if you do depart from the principle laid down in these resolutions, while the establishment of a higher duty will not serve the country, it will tell greatly against the United States, and cause much unpleasant feeling between both nations. I am glad, now, when free-trade and monopoly are the cries, to be able to state that I am holding in these observations the same line of argument that I held in 1827, when the same subject was before the Hoe. I am reported to have said then,—

> "I did not believe that the quantity of flour imported into this country by America could ever in any way injure us; but he felt that if the House did prevent the importation of almost the only article we obtained from that country—if it did appear to say that it availed itself of the first opportunity of excluding the only article they were enabled to send us, America would conceive the measure to arise from some lurking animosity, and this country would lay itself open to the danger of retaliation, which would infinitely outweigh any evil that might be dreaded by our millers."*

That, Sir, was the language I held in 1827, and I am glad to be able to repeat it now for the House. Sir, if I held the claim of the millers to the protection they require to be just, I would at once concede it to them; but it is not, and therefore I refuse it. As the case stands, the millers have a practical monopoly of grinding all the grain grown in this country—they are exposed to no competition. The annual produce of the United Kingdom is about 24,000,000 of quarters of wheat, exclusive of oats and barley, part of which must be ground also. But as this may be esteemed somewhat over the mark, suppose we take the yearly produce at 22,000,000 of quarters. Now, the British millers have the whole of this quantity to grind, and in this it is impossible for the foreign miller to compete with them. Surely that circumstance in itself is equivalent to protection. My noble Friend says that the bill before the committee will have the effect of giving a more continuous supply; and the miller argues that the more improved commercial intercourse which will be established will make the supply of foreign flour at once greater and more regular. But though this may be the case, I beg my noble Friend and the committee to observe that flour labours under a disadvantage that wheat does not labour under—flour being much less fit for bonding than wheat—which removes one strong ground in favour of this argument on the subject of competition. And though it may be true that thirty-eight and a half gallons of wheat will not produce 196 lbs. of flour, if you take the offal and the coarser sort of meal produced into consideration, you will come, as I have done, to the conclusion that the protection now offered is amply sufficient for all useful purposes. Coupling this, with the monopoly in grinding the grain grown here which the miller now enjoys, you will think with me that I cannot conscientiously say that any further protection should be added. But there is another point in connection with the subject which deserves consideration also. There is such a large disproportion between the relative prices of wheat and bread in seasons of scarcity, that I cannot help looking at it with surprise, nor can I help thinking, on taking this fact into consideration, that when the price of bread is so unintelligibly high, in relation to the price of wheat, that an importation of foreign flour, now and then, will have the effect of reducing that price to its proper level, and in so far of greatly benefitting the community. Sir, the House must decide this question on the general principle, and without reference to individual claims or particular interests. And, if on considering all its bearings, we conclude that we should make an exception in favour of any one article in this schedule over another, it will be for the House to say whether that exception shall be made in favour of flour. I do not think it just, or wise, or politic, to make such exception, and I cannot think that the protection claimed in its favour is warranted or needed.

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* Hansard, Vol. xvi, new series, p. 1270.

Mr. *Labouchere* was glad to hear the right hon. Baronet speak as he did, and he bore testimony to the truth of the right hon. Baronet's statements as regarded the proportions in which bread stuff came to this country. In 1828 the quantity of foreign grain imported into England was 1,350,000 quarters, while of foreign flour there were only imported 4,300,000lbs., or about one-twelfth of the quantity of wheat. He agreed entirely in the last observation of the right hon. Gentleman, for he considered it of the utmost importance for the interests of the consumers, that the power which the miller now had of advancing the price of bread should not be without some check—and he thought that would be best effected by allowing a larger quantity of food to come into this country in the shape of flour. He wished that he could entertain the sanguine hopes of the noble Lord the Member for Liverpool that the measure of the right hon. Baronet would establish a regular trade in corn; he admitted that by the measure the trade would be somewhat improved; but he was afraid that they could not look for that material alteration which would lead to the results anticipated by the noble Lord. He was glad, however, that the Government had resolved to adhere to their proposal so far as it related to the importation of flour.

Resolution agreed to, as were also the following resolutions—

> "For every quantity of 181 pounds and a half; a duty equal in amount to the duty payable on a quarter of oats."
>
> "Maize or Indian corn, buckwheat, bear or bigg—for every quarter; a duty equal in amount to the duty payable on a quarter of barley."

On the question that wheat the produce of and imported from any British possession in North America or elsewhere out of Europe, whenever the average price shall be under *55s.*, the duty shall be for every quarter *5s.*

Mr. *Smith O'Brien* begged the indulgence of the House whilst he brought forward the motion of which he had given notice. The ground upon which he rested his motion was, that British labour should be fostered and encouraged as much in one part of the empire as another, and that if any preference were shown, it ought to be shown to the colonist. The colonists had largely supplied this country with the means of defence against her enemies, and they were also the greatest consumers of her manufactures. The time too, must come, when the increase of population in this country would render us mainly dependent on a supply of corn from abroad, and to whom could we then look so advantageously as to our own colonists? What could be more natural than for us to do everything in our power to induce our colonists to cultivate agriculture rather than manufactures? The motion which he was about to propose would have that effect, and at the same time contained nothing in it calculated to excite the alarm of the agriculturists of this country; for the whole quantity of grain which, under the most favourable circumstances, had been imported from our colonial possessions was 260,000 quarters, a quantity quite inconsiderable in comparison with the total consumption of this country. Now, the right hon. Baronet had not as yet explained to the House upon what grounds he had adopted the plan which was now proposed with regard to grain the produce of our colonial possessions; and so far as he had been able to learn that plan would be more prejudicial to the interests of the colonists than the existing law. It was said, that if the regular trade in corn, which he wished the House to adopt in place of the proposal of the right hon. Baronet, were to be established, it would lead to the importation of great quantities of American corn through our Canadian colonies. He did not think that there was any ground for that apprehension; but if it were so, and the House were prepared to adopt his principle, it would be easy for the executive Government to make some arrangement which would prevent that mischief. This question created great interest in the colonies; and as no other Member had taken up the subject he had felt it his duty to do so. He hoped that this would not be treated by any one as a party question; but if it were, he could only say that he had been actuated by no such motives in bringing it forward. The hon. Member concluded by moving that—

"For every quarter of wheat the produce of

British possessions, in North America or elsewhere out of Europe the duty shall be 1*s.*

Lord *Stanley* could assure the hon. Member that her Majesty's Government were as fully convinced as he, or any other hon. Member could be, of the necessity of improving, by every means in their power, the commercial intercourse between the British colonies and the mother country. The hon. Gentleman could not estimate more highly than he did the value of that trade; no man could be more desirous than he was to remove every obstruction and impediment which could interfere with the free commercial intercourse between this country and the colonies. But he confessed that he could not understand upon what reasoning the hon. Member grounded that opinion, which he said was entertained by many parties, that our North American colonies would, under the proposed measure, be in a worse position than at present. Now, at present a duty of 5*s.*—not a heavy duty, if it were always enforced—attached, until the price of wheat here was 67*s.* By the measure which the Government proposed, the duty of 5*s.* attached only until the price here was 55*s.* It was quite true, that, under the system at present in force, the duty of 5*s.*, when the price rose above 67*s.*, fell down at once to a nominal duty of 6*d.*; and it was equally true, that her Majesty's Government, objecting to that sudden rise and fall, had introduced the same principle of a gradually sliding scale as to colonial wheat, which they had introduced with respect to foreign produce. They had introduced their scale to apply at the 55*s.* whereas the former applied at 67*s.* He was not, however, content to rest upon that; because he knew that there had arisen in the colonies an anxious desire that the produce of the colonies should be admitted into the English markets free of duty; and if, in point of fact, the question was as to the protection of the produce of Canada, or any other British possession, the hon. Member would have had a much stronger case than he had at present. Under such circumstances, he, for one, and he believed he might say the whole agricultural interest, would feel no jealousy at the free importation of wheat and flour from Canada; but the real fact was, as was well known, that the importation from Canada was not the importation of Canadian produce, it was United States wheat passing through Canada—and then, by being ground, acquiring the character of Canadian flour. The hon. Member had argued that every facility ought to be given for the extension and promotion of agriculture amongst those persons who went out from this country and settled in our colonial possessions; but if the hon. Member were to consult the agriculturists of Canada, they would tell him that that proposal of his was precisely what they deprecated, the free admission into this country of what passed under the name of Canadian wheat, but, in reality, United States wheat ground in Canada. What, however, was the relation subsisting between Canada and the United States? The United States had imposed on Canadian corn and flour imported into the United States a duty of from 1*s.* to 1*s.* 3*d.* per bushel, or from 8*s.* to 10*s.* per quarter, whilst the importation into Canada of wheat from the United States was perfectly free; and if the Canadians desired to have it free, it was not the wish of her Majesty's Government to impose any restrictions upon that exchange which was now established by their receiving American produce free of all duty. His right hon. Friend had distinctly told the House that he would not press for a duty on American corn imported into Canada. If they thought fit to remove the duty levied upon the importation of Canadian corn into this country, it was not just to call upon them, under the plausible argument of giving encouragement to Canadian agriculture to relieve from the burdens of duty all the corn and flour which passed from America through Canada, taking, at the same time, no means to prevent themselves from being inundated with American corn. This was the ground on which he, for one, could not concur with the motion of the hon. Gentleman. If there were any alteration of the law which regulated the importation of wheat into Canada—if they passed such a restriction on wheat going into Canada as would free this country from competition with American corn under the name of Canadian corn—then the Canadians would be entitled to a greater relief, but if they did not choose to do this, or if they did not wish to see free the trade both of American and Canadian grain, then he could not see any reason why they should do indirectly what they refused to do directly. The hon. Gentleman's motion was not a proposal for importing Canadian wheat, or for encouraging its importation and its growth, but it was a proposal for importing and for encouraging the growth and the importation of that American wheat, upon which, thinking it entitled to no protection —they thought it wise to impose a duty.

Mr. *Labouchere* said, that he was not well acquainted with the particulars of the colonial trade between the Canadas and the United States, but he believed that his noble Friend must be mistaken if he thought that the whole, or that even a great portion of the flour which was imported into this country from Canada was of American growth. If he had been rightly informed, and if he had rightly understood the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Gladstone), the flour admitted into this country as Canadian, must not only be ground in Canada, but a certificate of origin was necessary previous to its admission. It must be grown as well as ground in Canada. Of course, no system could be framed so exactly, or could be applied so strictly, but that some abuse would creep in, but he could not believe that the abuse in the present case, to which his noble Friend had alluded, had gone to the great length which he seemed to suppose. His noble Friend wished them to think that all the corn entered as Canadian into the English market was American, but he was much misunderstood if the abuse had not been exaggerated. He believed that this had taken place—that if, from the state of the English market, it was for the advantage of the Canadian growers to send Canadian flour into this country, they could get a supply for themselves, of the means of getting which, he hoped the House would not deprive them, from the United States. Under those circumstances, they consumed the American supply, and sent their own corn to England, to supply the deficiency of the English market. That practice, he believed, prevailed in the Channel Islands. The people of Guernsey and Jersey, with that sagacity for which they were distinguished, did not consume their own corn, but for their own consumption obtained grain from France, and sent the produce of their own islands to England. But that was very different from what his noble Friend had said. The practice, as he had described it, rendered the Canadian trade a mere transit trade, and certainly it was something more than this. He confessed that he spoke on this subject with diffidence, but he believed, as he had already said, that a certificate of origin was required previous to the admission of Canadian corn or flour into this country. That brought him to another bill which was about to be introduced by her Majesty's Government—which, though it related to another subject, was yet so closely connected with the present, that he would briefly call the attention of the House to it. The proposal which Government made was not for preventing American grain from passing the border, but for preventing American flour from doing so. They said that all the same advantage would result to Canada, whether the grain imported from the United States be in its natural or in its artificial and manufactured form. But he believed that the great portion of American corn would always go in the shape of flour rather than of wheat, and that naturally it must. The long range of flour factories lying near the border would necessarily produce such a result. But the first question which he wished to put to the right hon. Gentleman opposite, the Vice-President of the Board of Trade, was, for what purpose were they desirous of discouraging the importation of American flour? Was it for an English or for Canadian purposes? If it were for a Canadian purpose, then it ought to be left to the Canadian legislature. The Canadian people were the best judges of the benefit which they would gain from such a measure, and their own colonial representatives should decide as to its advantages or disadvantages. He would not assert that it would not be right for the Government to confirm their act, if they agreed to this measure. Upon that point he would express no opinion, but he contended that the Legislature of England had no right to meddle with a plan, the effects of which were supposed, exclusively, to be confined to one of her colonies. So he dismissed from his mind altogether the Canadian part of the subject. He could not suppose that the Government would have interfered in the first instance, if the benefit to be derived were confined to Canada. He supposed, therefore, that the measure was proposed for some English object. There would be another opportunity of debating upon this question at length, and he would not, therefore, detain the House at the present moment. But he thought that they had a right to know what object was intended to be gained by the proposal of this measure? He should be very glad to hear that the hon. Gentleman would favour the committee with the reasons and grounds upon which the proposition he intended to make with regard to the importation of American flour into Canada was founded.

Mr. *Gladstone* said, that it seemed to be the general impression of the committee that they should impose something beyond a merely nominal duty upon the importation of corn from Canada, if the principal part of that corn were to be obtained from America. The question therefore was, whether the principal part of the grain imported into this country under the name of Canadian was the growth of the United States or of Canada? If they looked to the figures relating to that importation during the last two years, they would see demonstrative indications that the grain, and the great bulk of the flour imported, came through the Canadas from wheat grown in the United States. From 1838 (he read from the fifty-eighth page of the papers recently laid before Parliament) to 1839, the importation of flour from Canada to England varied from between 30,000 and 40,000, to 70,000 and 80,000 cwt. Now, the amount imported, in 1840, was 380,000 cwt., and in 1841, the amount was no less than 682,000 cwt. of flour, besides 64,000 quarters of wheat. [Mr. *Labouchere*: Canada could produce that.] He did not say that at some future time Canada would not yield such an amount, but it must be perfectly clear that the bulk of that importation so suddenly augmented five and ten-fold—nine-tenths of it, or, at least, four-fifths of it—came from the United States. He was afraid that what he had said as to the state of the law had misled his right hon. Friend opposite. His right hon. Friend had just remarked that a certificate was required to show that the corn imported as Canadian was not merely manufactured, but also that it was grown in Canada—and that remark he had partly made upon his authority. Now, certainly that was the apparent bearing of one of the clauses of the Corn Act, as he read it, but practically, at any rate, that construction was not put upon it. According, as he believed, to an invariable practice of the revenue department, the flour ground in Canada, was at once held to be Canadian, and, accordingly, admitted without any further restraint or check. Of that, as matter of fact, there was no doubt. And it was also perfectly clear that the Canadian agriculture had not made the miraculous spring, which, if the exports he had read were of Canadian growth, it must have made. Those exports were fourteen or fifteen times larger in 1841 than they had been in 1839. His right hon. Friend said, that he believed there existed a practice of changing the consumption from one corn to another—that "during the time when the Canadian grower could export with profit his own corn, the Canadian people consumed corn imported from the United States." That practice, he did not mean to deny, might prevail to some extent, but he believed that it was limited. He could not think that such a bulky article could be carried through the land to every farmer in Canada, and be changed for his own crops, that these in their turn might be exported to Great Britain. Therefore, as to the point before them, it appeared quite clear that the imports from Canada consisted, to a considerable extent, of corn of American growth. The right hon. Gentleman had referred to a matter not connected with the immediate question before them, viz., the proposal of her Majesty's Government to impose a duty of 2*s.* a barrel on the importation of American flour into Canada; but, with the view which the right hon. Gentleman took of the present subject, it certainly was not entirely unconnected. So he would give an explicit and frank answer to the question he had put to him. He had asked him whether that measure was intended for a Canadian or for a British object? He could not say that it was for a Canadian object, neither could he say that it was for a British object. The effect on the British market must necessarily be trivial and remote; and it was not intended for the benefit of Canada. But the measure had been proposed with reference rather to the inter-colonial trade. It had been brought forward to do justice between the different colonies of this country. The state of the commercial law between the various colonies of this country had hitherto been most anomalous. The sugar colonies of the West Indies, and the colonies of North America, were all, with the exception of Canada, placed under a restriction with regard to the importation of American flour. It was hard, the Government felt, to place on the consumers of one colony a tax upon the importation of foreign flour, while they allowed exporting colonies at once to obtain the benefit of that tax in colonial markets for their own produce, and to substitute for what they thus exported, with a view to their own consumption, the same foreign article imported free. It was hard that the consumers of Newfoundland should be obliged to obtain grain from the United States, subject to a duty, whilst the consumers of Canada obtained it free from that duty. To prevent the continuance of this injustice they proposed to lay a duty upon American flour. It was not done with any special reference to its effect on the British markets, or upon the Canadian trade. It was not done as a retaliation for the duty which America has imposed upon our commodities, but it had been proposed from a sense of the importance of dealing, in these matters, with the colonies upon principles of equality and impartiality. They ought to abolish the whole tax, or impose it upon exporting as well as importing colonies, and the Government accordingly proposed that the state of the law should be that a 2*s*. duty be imposed in all the colonies of the West Indies and North America, and that the duty of 5*s*., at present imposed in nearly the whole of them, should be reduced to 2*s*. throughout.

Mr. *Labouchere* said, that he had heard with such astonishment the statement of the right hon. Gentleman, that he could not remain silent. He said that the measure had been proposed for an "inter-colonial purpose." It appeared to him that this duty was to be levied merely for the sake of a fancied symmetry. Let them take the case of Newfoundland. There was a duty of 5*s*. upon the consumers in Newfoundland for the protection of Canadian over American grain; but he could ask for an answer to this question—What colony of England, what branch of colonial agriculture, what branch of colonial manufactures, was to derive benefit from this tax upon the consumers of Canada? Canada took flour exclusively from America, and, accordingly, by putting a duty upon American flour—a duty by which it was not pretended that any English agriculture was protected — they seemed merely to be acting—he said it with no offensive meaning to the right hon. Gentleman—in a spirit of pure malevolence. He was glad to hear the right hon. Gentleman say that the measure had not been proposed for any English purpose—that it was too trivial, too slight a matter, to affect, in any way, the English market. It was not, the right hon. Gentleman had also allowed, for any Canadian purpose. If, however, Canada did require any protection of any sort, they ought to leave her to protect herself. But, forsooth, the purpose in view was an inter-colonial purpose. He could not, really, assign any reasonable motive for the production of such a measure. He hoped that the Government would reconsider it. He would not say that they were acting unconstitutionally, but a more unwise, a more impolitic, a more wanton tax had never, he would venture to say, been imposed by a British Parliament. He sincerely hoped that if the Government could not find any better reason for it than the hon. Gentleman had offered them, that they would at once abandon the measure.

Mr. *Gladstone* said, that the astonishment of the right hon. Gentleman seemed to him so unnatural, that he must be allowed to say a word. He reciprocated that sentiment. That which the Government intended now to do with regard to the American flour, was the very thing which the right hon. Gentleman had done last year with respect to East India rum. He gave a privilege to East India rum in the British market. And then, what did he do? He laid a prohibitory duty upon the importation of rum into the East Indies. [Mr. *Labouchere*: That was for a British object.] It was precisely upon the same principle that Canada, claiming as an exporting country the privilege of an advantage in duty for the sale of her flour in other colonial markets, was to be made subject to a duty upon the importation of the same article: inasmuch as otherwise, by exporting her own and supplying its place by American flour, she would virtually levy a tax for her own benefit upon the consumers of the colonies to which she might so export. If, as the right hon. Gentleman said, his law with regard to the East Indies was for a British object, then he would say that, in that sense, this law with regard to Canada was also for a British or at any rate an imperial object. The principle was exactly the same in both cases. The only difference was that in the plan of his right hon. Friend its application had been far more stringent.

Mr. *C. Buller* inquired what colony it was to which the right hon. Gentleman wished to do justice? What colony besides Canada grew corn for the purpose of importing it into other colonies? The object for the prohibition on the importation of rum into the East Indies was very intelligible. We admitted East Indian rum on the same terms as West Indian; we therefore prevented the importation into the East Indies of other rum, to supply the place of any sent here, on these favourable terms. The right hon. Gentleman said that the amount was too trivial to make it important for British interests. He seemed to have done it on the great principle of the parish beadle. There were two stocks on each side of the church door, and the beadle put a boy into each. The magistrate coming by said—"Why, you have put two boys into the stocks, when I only ordered one." "Yes," replied the beadle, "I did it for the sake of uniformity." It was that same love of uniformity which had animated the right hon. Gentleman. And what was the immense quantity of flour imported from Canada? There had been no more than 200,000 or 300,000 quarters. They must recollect that Canada had 1,300,000 inhabitants, and did they suppose that this, which was a large wheat growing country, could not grow more than 200,000 or 300,000 quarters. The effect of the sliding scale had been to cause a sudden demand, and when that sudden demand came last year, the Canadians did precisely what the channel islands did, they sent their own corn to England and imported for themselves. The law as to the flour exported, being Canadian grown produce, is as stringent as it could be, and if it were evaded, it must be by the connivance of our own custom-house officers, who had a better mode of evading acts of parliament, than lawyers in framing them. If it were evaded, instead of clapping on this duty, they ought to alter the law and remove all doubt. The whole importation of wheat from Canada during the last ten years, had only been 519,000 quarters, or an average of 43,000 quarters a year. The prices at Montreal were from 52*s.* to 50*s.* a quarter, and they must add freight to England, never less than 13*s.* from Montreal. Surely a price of 65*s.* on 43,000 quarters was quite enough to protect the English land-owners? It really seemed to him that putting a duty on Canadian produce was quite nugatory, because it could scarcely come into our markets when subjected to no duty. We ought to do away with everything that tended to separate the colonies from being a part of the empire. In Canada, particularly, we ought to make the coast for the purposes of trade as much a part of the British empire as an English county. At that late hour, however, he hoped that his hon. Friend, the Member for Limerick, would not divide. It was a matter of too much importance to the colony, and he trusted that he would wait till the matter could be discussed in committee on the bill.

Mr. *S. Wortley* thought, that steps should be taken to prevent that which was conceded to the Canadians being converted into a privilege of the United States, especially as the Americans had lately increased the duties on colonial produce imported into their territory.

The committee divided on Mr. O'Brien's motion. Ayes, 38; Noes, 135:—Majority, 97.

List of the Ayes.

Aglionby, H. A.
Aldam, W.
Barclay, D.
Blake, Sir V.
Bowring, Dr.
Brotherton, J.
Buller, E.
Busfeild, W.
Colborne, hn.W.N.R.
Crawford, W. S.
Dawson, hon. T. V.
Duncan, G.
Ebrington, Viscount
Forster, M.
Gibson, T. M.
Gordon, Lord F.
Gore, hon. R.
Harford, S.
Hastie, A.
Hindley, C.
Hutt, W.
Johnstone, A.
Lambton, H.
Layard, Captain
Mitcalfe, H.
Morison, General
Murphy, F. S.
O'Connell, M. J.
Plumridge, Captain
Rawdon, Colonel
Smith, rt. hn. R. V.
Somerville, Sir W. M.
Stuart, Lord J.
Thornely, T.
Wawn, J. T.
Williams, W.
Wilson, M.
Wood, B.

TELLERS.
O'Brien, W. S.
Buller, C.

List of the Noes.

Acland, Sir T. D.
Acton, Colonel
Adare, Viscount
Antrobus, E.
Astell, W.
Bagge, W.
Bailey, J. jun.
Baring, hon. W. B.
Barrington, Viscount
Baskerville, T. B. M.
Beckett, W.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Beresford, Captain
Boldero, H. G.
Borthwick, P.
Botfield, B.
Broadley, H.
Broadwood, H.
Browne, hon. W.
Bruce, Lord E.
Bruce, C. L. C.
Burrell, Sir C. M.
Burroughes, H. N.
Campbell, Sir H.
Campbell, A.
Chelsea, Viscount

Chute, W. L. W.
Clayton, R. R.
Clerk, Sir G.
Collett, W. R.
Colvile, C. R.
Compton, H. G.
Corry, rt. hon. H.
Courtenay, Viscount
Darby, G.
Dawnay, hon. W. H.
Denison, E. B.
Dickinson, F. H.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Eaton, R. J.
Egerton, W. T.
Eliot, Lord
Escott, B.
Estcourt, T. G. B.
Fellowes, E.
Ferguson, Sir R. A.
Filmer, Sir E.
Fizroy, Captain
Fleming, J. W.
Ffolliott, J.
Forbes, W.
Gaskell, J. Milnes
Gladstone, rt.hn.W.E.
Gordon, hon. Captain
Gore, M.
Gore, W. R. O.
Goring, C.
Goulburn, rt. hon. H.
Graham, rt. hn. Sir J.
Greenaway, C.
Grimston, Viscount
Grogan, E.
Hale, R. B.
Hamilton, W. J.
Hamilton, Lord C.
Hardinge, rt. hn. Sir H.
Heathcote, Sir W.
Henley, J. W.
Hepburn, Sir T. B.
Hinde, J. H.
Hodgson, R.
Holmes, hn. W. A'C.
Hope, A.
Hope, G. W.
Hornby, J.
Hughes, W. B.
Inglis, Sir R. H.
Jackson, J. D.
Jermyn, Earl
Johnson, W. G.
Johnstone, Sir J.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Jones, Captain
Kemble, H.
Knightley, Sir C.
Leicester, Earl of
Lennox, Lord A.
Lincoln, Earl of
Lindsay, H. H.
Litton, E.
Lowther, J. H.
Lyall, G.
Mackenzie, W. F.
MacGeachy, F. A.
Mainwaring, T.
Manners, Lord J.
March, Earl of
Marsham, Viscount
Martin, C. W.
Martyn, C. C.
Masterman, J.
Mordaunt, Sir J.
Morgan, O.
Nicholl, rt. hon. J.
Norreys, Lord
Northland, Viscount
O'Brien, A. S.
Paget, Lord W.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Peel, J.
Pemberton, T.
Plumptre, J. P.
Pringle, A.
Rous, hon. Captain
Rushbrooke, Colonel
Ryder, hon. G. D.
Sandon, Viscount
Scott, hon. F.
Sibthorp, Colonel
Smollett, A.
Somerset, Lord G.
Somerton, Viscount
Stanley, Lord
Stuart, H.
Sutton, hon. H. M.
Taylor, T. E.
Thompson, Mr. Ald.
Vere, Sir C. B.
Vernon, G. H.
Villiers, Viscount
Wood, G. W.
Wortley, hon. J. S.
Wyndham, Colonel
Yorke, hon. E. T.
Young, J.

TELLERS.

Fremantle, Sir T.
Baring, H.

Original question agreed to.

The remaining portions of the scale were also agreed to, (see the Report. March 2, for the entire scale of duties.)

On the resolution that it is expedient to amend the laws as to the taking of the averages.

Mr. *Hawes* thought, that a promise had been given that the discussion on the mode of taking the averages should come on at this stage. The right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government had also signified that every information on the subject should be given before this question was mooted. He thought that the discussion ought to be taken now, whether or not the law should be altered.

Sir *R. Peel* conceived, that the more proper period for raising the discussion would be when the bill was introduced, and in the committee on the bill there would be just as good an opportunity of debating the matter as at the present moment.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* observed, that hon. Members would have an opportunity of raising the debate in the committee on the bill, by moving that the towns proposed to be added should be struck out, and that the law should remain the same as at present.

Mr. *C. Buller* said, a great number of Members had gone away on the understanding that a night would be set apart for discussion on this point. The best course to pursue was, for hon. Members to agree to the resolution, reserving to themselves the right of taking whatever course they thought proper on the bringing up of the report.

Resolution agreed to.

Colonel *Sibthorp* put it to the House whether or not he should proceed with the motion of which he had given notice at that hour.

Sir *R. Peel* put it to the Speaker whether there would be any impropriety in the gallant Member making his motion in committee on the bill, as it merely related to the period of levying the duties.

The *Speaker* said, that as the hon. Member's motion was not to increase the duties, but referred to the period when they should be levied, namely, on importation instead of when taken out of bond, it might be moved in committee on the bill.

Motion postponed.

Sir *V. Blake* rose to make the motion of which he had given notice, that

> "In consideration of the unexampled depression of trade and manufactures, corn be admitted free of duty for one year, or for such other limited period as Parliament may deem fit and proper."

Sir *R. Peel* apprehended that the hon. Member ought to have made his motion when the scale was under consideration.

Sir *V. Blake* said, that both the Speaker and Mr. Greene (the chairman of committees) had intimated to him that the present was the proper period for making his motion.

Motion withdrawn.

House resumed. Report to be received.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, March 1, 1842.

MINUTES.] BILLS. *Public.*—1^{a}· Appellate Jurisdiction (House of Lords); Appeals (Privy Council); Transfer Administration of Justice (Court of Chancery).

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By the Earl of Roseberry, from Stirling, Linlithgow, and Dalmuir, and Lord Brougham, from Renfrew, for Repeal of the Corn-laws, and for Universal Suffrage.—By the Duke of Richmond, from Millers of London and its neighbourhood, for Protection.—By Lord Brougham, from Congregations of Dublin, Castle Caulfield, and Cairn Castle, to Legalize certain Marriages by Dissenters.—By the Duke of Buccleugh, from Banff, for Securing the Freedom of Election.

COURT OF APPEAL.] Lord *Campbell:* In presenting three bills which I have prepared for your Lordships' consideration, I intend shortly to state their object,—reserving the fuller explanation of them to the time when they stand for a second reading. I am glad to think that the measure which I propose is not of a party nature, and that in bringing it forward, it will not be necessary for me to make any observations which can be painful to the feelings of any individual. Giving all credit for what has been already done, I aim at a farther improvement in the administration of justice in this House,—in the Privy Council,—and in the Court of Chancery. I need not point out to your Lordships the extreme importance in every country of the Court of Appeal in the last resort. This court not only finally decides upon the rights of parties, but authoritatively settles and promulgates the law; and your Lordships may be aware, that the code of every nation originates much more from judicial decision than from legislative enactment. The supreme court of appeal ought to consist of judges of the highest learning and character, whose duty it is to attend all its meetings,—with a permanent head to preside over it,—sitting at fixed times—expeditiously disposing of all the cases brought before it—without excessive expense being cast upon the suitors who resort to it. Have we such a tribunal in England? From early times this House has without dispute had jurisdiction in writs of error from the courts of common law. It was not till the reign of Charles 2nd that you established your right to receive appeals from the courts of equity,—respecting which there had been great uncertainty and irregularity. Before the Reformation the appeal from the Ecclesiastical Courts was to the Pope. In the reign of Henry 8th, when all intercourse with the see of Rome was broken off, a strange expedient was resorted to, which continued in practice till the reign of William 4th, of appointing a tribunal for each suit appealed from the ecclesiastical courts, by a commission of delegates appointing a certain number of common law judges and doctors of the civil law to decide it, if they could agree, or there should be a majority on either side;—if not, their number to be increased by "adjuncts" of the same description. Appeals in prize causes were brought before Commissioners of Appeal specially appointed by the Crown. From the Channel Islands and the colonies the appeal was to the King in Council, and so it was from the Court of Admiralty and the Lord Chancellor sitting in lunacy, by virtue of a deputation under the royal sign manual. Things continued in this state till the year 1833, when the act was passed, constituting the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, for which the public is much indebted to my noble and learned Friend who then presided on the Woolsack (Lord Brougham). By that act the Court of Delegates was abolished, a committee of the Privy Council was established, consisting of those who hold or have held high judicial offices,—and to this tribunal were referred all prize appeals and all appeals from the ecclesiastical courts, from the Court of Admiralty, from the Channel Islands, and from the colonies. This was undoubtedly a great improvement, but it still left the system imperfect, and experience has shewn that further change is inevitable. I need hardly go farther, than to point out that you have two courts of the last resort, co-ordinate, of equal authority, to whom the very same questions of law are referred, and who may decide those questions different ways. There is no question of English law which may be brought before this House which may not likewise be brought before the judicial committee, as little bound by your decisions as you are by theirs. Under these circumstances discrepancy of decision must arise—most galling to the losing party, and most injurious to the public. The very same question may come before either tribunal of appeal in the very same suit. Take, for example, the late Braintree case, when the question was, whether churchwardens, of their own authority, could make a church-rate against a vote of the majority of the rate-payers. If it had gone on by appeal from the sentence of the Consistory Court of London, it would have been brought before the Judicial Committee. An application was made to the Court of Queen's Bench for a prohibition,—upon which a writ of error lies to this House. Your Lordships may decide with the Queen's Bench that the churchwardens have not the power, and the Judicial Committee, with the Consistory Court, that they have. In this conflict, how are churchwardens to act? and are the parishioners to pay or refuse to pay the rate? Then the allotment of business to the two tribunals is very whimsical, and without any regard to its difficulty or importance. Questions respecting marriage and divorce go to the Judicial Committee, although, indeed, the validity of the same marriage, arising in a different shape, might, upon a bill of exceptions, or special verdict, be brought before this House. The validity of wills of personal property, however great the amount, is to be determined by the Judicial Committee,—of which he had lately an instance in the will of Mr. Wood, of Gloucester, bequeathing a million of money. But your Lordships are to determine the validity of a will of real property, if it devise only half a rood of land. The two tribunals, consisting of different judges, can hardly be supposed equally entitled to the confidence of the public. And why should questions of such magnitude to the parties and the public be determined by the one inferior in efficiency and in reputation? Another inconvenience follows from the separation;—that a bar devoted to the appellate business cannot be formed. I need not point out to your Lordships the importance of an adequate bar to the due administration of justice. Judges, however learned and laborious, cannot satisfactorily decide the causes brought before them, unless they are well argued by advocates on opposite sides; and advocates cannot satisfactorily do their duty, unless they chiefly confine their practice to one court. But the Judicial Committee does not sit above forty or fifty days in the year, and the advocates who are to plead there, must be brought for the occasion from other courts. A heavy expence is thus thrown upon the suitors; for in every case, without regard to the magnitude of the stake, or the labour required, the *quiddam honorarium* given to the Counsel, so brought from his own court, cannot be less than a certain fixed amount—considerably exceeding what would be sufficient for him in the same cause coming on in a court, in which he usually practises. The solicitors must, likewise, have extra remuneration, and the members of the Judicial Committee, lately deliberating on this subject, came to the conclusion, that in taxing costs, they could not allow the solicitors less than half as much again as the tariff in the Court of Chancery, or Queen's Bench. I will mention only one other inconvenience of two Courts of Appeal in the last resort, that both may, and occasionally must, sit at the same time; so as to deprive one of them of efficient members, exceedingly to harass the counsel, and very much to prejudice the suitors. You must then choose between the two, and transfer all appeals to that tribunal which you prefer. This was strongly felt by my noble and learned Friend, who, in the year 1834, laid upon your Lordships' Table a bill to transfer all the judicial business of this House to the Privy Council. My Lords, my plan is to transfer all the judicial business of the Privy Council to this House. The Judicial Committee, in my judgment, is subject to various defects which can hardly be remedied. It has no permanent head. The President of the Council, if present, presides; but he has not been professionally educated, and is unacquainted with judicial proceedings. I can say, most unaffectedly, that on questions of fact, which have come before the Judicial Committee, such as whether a testator was sane or insane when he made his will, or whether he was fraudulently induced to sign it, we have derived every valuable assistance from the acuteness and discrimination of the present Lord President, who sits opposite; but he would hardly like to give an opinion concerning contingent remainders, and executory devises; and he could hardly expect a judgment by him on such a subject to be received with much deference. In his absence, the Privy Councillor of highest rank, who is pleased to attend, presides, and he may make us regret the Lord President. The attendance of the members is quite voluntary, and the greatest difficulty has often been experienced in forming a Board. The Judges are a fluctuating body, no one being able to tell whether the individuals who decided a cause yesterday, will decide a cause of the same sort to-morrow. Then they have no such power as your Lordships possess, of calling in the Common-Law Judges as assessors, in cases of difficulty. In the original constitution of the Court, two or three Common-Law Judges were selected, and sworn Privy Councillors, that they might act as members of the Committee. I protest against this course being continued; unless all the Common-Law Judges can be made Privy Councillors, make none. The selection, I know, gave great offence, and caused great heart-burnings in that venerable body. I must likewise consider the practice highly unconstitutional. The Judges may consider the honour of being of the Privy Council an object of ambition, and this is to be gratified or disappointed as they may happen to make themselves agreeable or obnoxious to the Government of the day. I must likewise protest against an enactment, such as I think was introduced into my noble and learned Friend's bill of 1834, giving a power to the Privy Council at pleasure, to summon the Judges *ad conciliendum*. These learned persons, like their predecessors, from time immemorial, cheerfully obey the summons of your Lordships, sitting in the House of Parliament, and representing the supreme power of the State. But I know they consider that it is inconsistent with the dignity of their office, and would hurt their usefulness, if they were subject to the summons of a Committee of the Privy Council, which may consist of individuals for whom they could not have any very profound respect. Let all appeals, then, be brought to this House, the ancient constitutional Court of Appeal for the empire. I have supported and defended the exercise of your appellate jurisdiction. In your political and legislative capacity, I have often had the misfortune to differ from your Lordships, and to think that you made by no means a wise use of the power you possess, and I rather conceive that the mass of mankind have agreed with me; but in your judicial capacity you have deserved and enjoyed the confidence of the public. It is easy to ridicule the theory of hereditary judges; but in practice the appeals in this House have been decided by a succession of illustrious judges who have presided on the Woolsack, assisted by lawyers who have filled high judicial offices, and have been elevated to the Peerage. In the other House of Parliament, I had occasion to defend you against the assaults of the present Lord Chancellor of Ireland, who in no very measured terms condemned the manner in which the judicial business of this House is conducted. He not only considered the chancellor incompetent *per se*, but he censured the interference of law Lords *in their ordinary garb* and found fault with every thing down to the clerks sitting at the Table while appeals are heard. He was to march in two Lords assistant who were to dictate to you the judgment you were to pronounce, and by whom your jurisdiction would have been virtually superseded. I advise you to retain that jurisdiction, as an invaluable part of your privileges conferred upon you for the public good. You have it in your power at all times, to call in the assistance of the common law judges. I propose that the Vice-Chancellors, and likewise the Judge of the Admiralty Court, and the Judge of the Prerogative Court of the Archbishop of Canterbury, should be summoned at the commencment of every Parliament that you may have similar advice in questions of equity and civil law. I have not ventured to include the Scotch judges on account of the distance of their residence, but it may be matter for future consideration whether they ought not to be included; and as a native of Scotland feeling for the honor of my country, I trust that when summoned they will be placed on the Woolsack alongside their English brethren, and not ordered to remain as in some instances they have been like criminals at the Bar. Here, then, you will have one court of ultimate appeal combining all the requisites of such a tribunal. The expense of bringing appeals here I know is at present great; but this may be considerably reduced by there being an exclusive bar, and by regulations which it is in your power to make respecting fees received by officers of the House. There is no reason why the expense of hearing an appeal at the Bar of this House from the Lord Chancellor, should be greater than hearing an appeal before the Lord Chancellor from the Master of the Rolls. Such being some of the advantages of this transfer, what are the objections to it? The Queen's subjects at home who may be suitors in the Admiralty or Ecclesiastical Courts, must rejoice. The colonies must all rejoice. There is nothing more natural or constitutional, than that the appellate jurisdiction of this House should be co-extensive with the British empire.

Before the year 1782, when Ireland was declared to be an independent kingdom writs of error and appeals were brought from the Irish courts to this House, and why should not the same course be followed with respect to the courts in Jamaica and Canada? These are the Queen's Courts, and the appeal will be to her Majesty in Parliament. This House will not be legislating for the colonies, but only declaring the law. Legislation for the colonies will still belong to the Queen in Council, or to the colonial assemblies, or to the whole Imperial Parliament. But it will be said, the House of Lords will not have time during the Session to get through all this judicial business. I believe that it would not;—particularly considering the increased influx of appeals from the colonies which might be expected from this improvement. But where is the objection to the House of Lords being directed by the Crown to sit for judicial business during the prorogation of Parliament. If precedent be wanting, we have one in an act passed in the 14th of Edward 3rd, for appointing a committee of the Lords to sit during the time of prorogation,—an act, no doubt, produced by the inconvenience felt even at that early time from the long suspension of the sittings of this high Court of Appeal. Even with regard to the exercise of your ancient jurisdiction, this would be a great improvement. At present generally no appeal is heard from July or August to the middle of February, which must necessarily produce great inconvenience with respect to appeals respecting injunctions, the custody of infants, and other subjects of pressing urgency. The plan I suggest, necessarily supposes the constant attendance of the Lord Chancellor in this House throughout the judicial year. He is for ever withdrawn from the Court of Chancery. But this, my Lords, seems to me to be a very great advantage; for now we shall have a judge appointed to preside in that court *quamdiu se bene gesserit*. I do not concur in the sentiment which has often been expressed, that the union of political and judicial functions in the same individual ought never to be permitted. I allow that some political and judicial functions are incompatible. I think it was wrong in the year 1806, to make the Chief Justice of the King's Bench a Cabinet Minister, so that he might have had to sit on the trial of a prosecution for libel or high treason which he himself had directed, and on the event of which the stability of the Administration might depend. But if the Lord Chancellor had full time for all the duties cast upon him I can see nothing objectionable in their being united in his person. What I do object to is, that in the highest civil court in this kingdom the judge should be removeable at the will of the Crown; and as a matter of course, should he removed as often as there is a change of Administration. What should we say if the Chief Justice of the King's Bench, or Common Pleas, or the Chief Baron of the Exchequer were so removeable and removed. It is only use that prevents us from seeing that the grievance is as great to the suitors and to the public by the removal of the Chief Judge in the Court of Chancery. The evils are great and palpable, and it might appear invidious to illustrate them by examples. The only question is, whether, upon an enlarged view of all our institutions, it is necessary for the purpose of preventing greater evils, that these evils should still be endured. Formerly, there might be a necessity for the Chief Judge in the Court of Chancery being removeable with the Administration. I allow that for the dignity of this House and the efficient discharge of your duties, it is essential that the highest Judge of the land should preside here, and should act in concert with the Government of the day. It is likewise essential that, in every Cabinet, there should be a Member qualified to give a sound opinion on every legal and constitutional question which may arise. Till recent times, perhaps, this could only be the Chief Judge in the Court of Chancery; and hence it was necessary that he should hold his office by such a precarious tenure. The appellate business of this House was wholly insufficient to occupy the time of a Judge, and was disposed of by sitting a few hours two or three days of the week. Now you have occupation for a supreme Judge in this House throughout the year. He, therefore, presides here, and sits in the Cabinet being removeable with the Administration; and all objection vanishes to having a permanent Judge in the Court of Chancery. There is by no means the same inconvenience to be apprehended from the removal of the Chancellor presiding in this House in appeals; for he still remains a Member of the House. He can still give judgment in any causes which have been argued before him previous to his removal, and as ex-chancellor, he will assist, and be a check upon his successor. One great advantage of this change is, that it will let in an effectual appeal in all cases from the Court of Chancery. The business in the Court of Chancery has been admirably done by a succession of very able men holding the great seal, but before any cause or point of law is finally determined, there ought to be one appeal, the greatest men being fallible. But the appeal from the Chancellor in Chancery to the Chancellor in the House of Lords, has been little more than a mockery;—and the reputation of Lord Hardwicke cannot be rested on the fact, that none of his decrees were reversed. It is an appeal *ab eodem, ad eundem,* and as Sir E. Sugden says, with truth as well as point; it is not from Philip drunk, to Philip sober—but from Philip sober to Philip drunk, as the Chancellor is likely to view the case more calmly and dispassionately in the Court of Chancery before he has committed himself by any expression of opinion, than when he sits upon his own trial in the House of Lords and for the sake of his reputation he takes almost as great an interest in the result as the parties to the suit. In the judicial committee, the Judge from whose court the appeal comes is not allowed to sit, while in the House of Lords he has usually been the only Judge of appeal. Is not the removal of this grievance, a strong reason for having a permanent Judge in the Court of Chancery and another person presiding over the deliberations of this House? But it is said, the appellate Judge cannot properly discharge his duty unless he is at the same time sharpening his faculties by acting occasionally as a Judge of a court of original jurisdiction. There is no ground for this objection either in reason or from experience. The judicial business of this House must be abundantly sufficient to exercise the understanding, and to keep up the learning of any Judge, and he may see more clearly when always elevated above the heats and mists which may obscure the inferior regions of the law. In no foreign country are the Judges of the Court of last resort allowed to sit in a court of original jurisdiction; and it is a curious fact, that in those foreign countries, generally speaking, it is only the decisions of the courts of last resort that are reported and received as authentic declarations of the state of the law, while in England, almost the whole body of the law is traced to reports of the decisions of the inferior courts, and Sir John Leach would not allow the decisions of the Privy Council to be quoted as authority, and very much regretted that they were ever printed. I am happy to think that the object I have in view may be accomplished without any addition to the number of Judges. By an act of the last Session of Parliament, two Vice-Chancellors were appointed. I find they, with the other Judges of the court, are rapidly reducing the arrears so long complained of; and that there is every reason to believe that four Judges will be sufficient to keep down all arrears for the future. It will be observed that I am not withdrawing the entire power of one Judge from the Court of Chancery; for the Chancellor, during the Session of Parliament, sits three days in the week in the House of Lords, his progress in the Court of Chancery is impeded even on the days he sits, by their alternate recurrence, and he is not unfrequently called away by Cabinet Councils, and other political distractions. I propose then that one of the four remaining judges shall be appointed to preside as Chief Judge. This is necessary to preserve subordination, and to give an appeal upon interlocutory proceedings without necessarily coming to the House of Lords. I think, after a final decree by the Master of the Rolls or the Vice-chancellor, the appeal should be to the House of Lords. At any rate, I would allow only one unsuccessful appeal, and that the decision of the Chief Judge affirming the order or decree of the inferior Judge shall be final. To carry these views into effect, I have prepared the three Bills which I hold in my hand. The first transfers the hearing of all appeals from the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council to this House. The second empowers the crown to summon this House to sit for judicial business when Parliament is prorogued. The third appoints a permanent Judge to preside in the Court of Chancery. I should observe, that the Judicial Committee will still remain, for the removal of patents, for giving an opinion on any question of law propounded to it by the Crown, and for other useful purposes. It seems to have been thought by all who have considered the subject, that the present state of things with respect to the appellate jurisdiction and the Court of Chancery, is unsatisfactory, and that some considerable change must be made. My noble and learned Friend, the parent of the Judicial Committee, has proposed that your Lordships should divest yourselves of your appellate jurisdiction altogether. My noble and learned Friend now on the Woolsack, brought in a bill having for its object that a Vice-Chancellor should be appointed to preside in the Privy Council. My noble and learned Friend his immediate predecessor, proposed that this duty should be done by the Master of the Rolls. My noble and learned Friend the Master of the Rolls, more adventurous, proposes a tripartite division of the Lord Chancellor: one-third of him to sit in the Court of Chancery, under the name of Lord Chancellor; one-third to act in this House, under the title of President, in matter of appeals and writs of error, backed by Lords-assistants; while the remaining third is to be minister of justice, under the title of Lord Keeper. With all deference to my noble and learned Friends, I think my plan is the simplest and the most efficacious. It creates no new office; it disturbs no recognised institution; it brings no fresh burden on the country; it only applies more efficaciously to the despatch of judicial business the judicial machinery which we now possess. The details of the Bills will be before the House on the second reading, and I shall then be prepared to explain and defend them.

The *Lord Chancellor :* Though he could not object to the course his noble and learned Friend had taken, in laying the bills upon the Table, must, at the same time, observe, notwithstanding his noble and learned Friend had told their Lordships, that the profession had generally approved of his plan, that he had not been kind enough to communicate the contents of those bills to him, and he therefore should be excused if he did not follow his noble and learned Friend into the details of his measure, but confined himself to some general remarks. First, with regard to the Court of Chancery. The noble and learned Lord had referred to the bill of last Session. That bill had received the support of noble Lords on both sides of the House. Its object was to reduce the arrear of causes in the Court of Chancery, so that a suitor would be able to be heard as soon as his cause was ready for hearing; and he was happy to be able to state to their Lordships, that that object had been completely accomplished. Twelve years ago, when he before held the Great Seal, he had introduced, at two successive periods, bills which were directed to the same object, but which, although they passed their Lordships' House, met with so much opposition in another place, that they failed of success. But with regard to the bill of his noble and learned Friend who sat near him (Lord Cottenham), he was happy to be able to congratulate him upon the result of his measure, which was a most wise one, and had been attended by the results which he (the Lord Chancellor) had felt confident would flow from it. Look at some of those results. In the month of November last, at the commencement of Michaelmas term, when the bill came into operation, there were upwards of 500 causes waiting for hearing in the Court of Chancery, and that state of things had continued for a considerable period. Such was the state of the business that his noble and learned Friend told them that the judges who tried the causes had been obliged to sit permanently, as it were, night and day, the Vice-Chancellor having risen on one morning at four o'clock, and the Chancellor having gone to bed at the same hour. Since November 230 new cases were set down, making in all 730 cases in arrear for trial. But, at the present moment, including the new causes as well as the old ones that stood over, there were not more than 100 causes in arrear. [Lord *Brougham :* 132.] When such a reduction had taken place in so short a time, he did not think he had been wrong in saying, that the object of his noble and learned Friend's bill had been fully and completely accomplished. He was well aware that his noble and learned Friend on the Bench below (Lord Brougham) would state that this result was only a verification of his prediction; but his noble and learned Friend had over and over again stated to the House, and in the committee, that his opinion was, that one additional judge would be sufficient. Did his noble Friend entertain the same opinion now? He thought the actual state of the business of the court had sufficiently decided that point. It had been over and over again stated in the committee, by persons of the greatest knowledge and experience in the law, that it was their opinion that if additional facilities were afforded for the trial of causes, there would be a great accession of business in the Court of Chancery. That opinion had been justified by the event. The increase was no less than 30 per cent., exclusive of those causes that were not yet ripe for hearing, and were not therefore included. To get rid of the arrears in the Court of Chancery was an object of the last importance. Their Lordships could form but a very imperfect conception of the grievances to which suitors were exposed by repeated delays. The term fees alone caused by the arrear of causes amounted in a single year to no less a sum than 42,999*l.* The main question on the present occasion, however, was that which concerned appeals. His noble and learned Friend had argued that the new arrangements would increase the number of appeals. But at the present moment there were not more than twenty-four appeals, and he was satisfied that the result would be, that when the business regularly fell into its ordinary channels, there would not be more than fifteen or twenty appeals each year. It thus was quite obvious, that the Lord Chancellor could well attend to those appeals during the year without interfering with his other functions, and so steadily perform his duties in their Lordships' House. His noble and learned Friend (Lord Campbell), however, had thought fit to throw out that it was unwise for the Chancellor to sit on appeal against his own decisions; but when his noble Friend made those remarks, he could not think that his noble Friend had sufficiently borne in mind the weight and importance of the judicial character. He might undertake to say, that when a case came before a judge, either on rehearing or appeal, he looked with as much caution to the considerations which had influenced his own decision, and perhaps with more, than he would had the decision been that of another. But how could such an argument apply to the judgments on appeal in their Lordships' House? Then, the Lord Chancellor did not sit alone—he had the aid of other noble Lords—indeed, he (the Lord Chancellor) had been sitting now for several days on appeals in that House, assisted by several noble and learned Lords. All decisions come to under such circumstances were not merely the decisions of the Lord Chancellor, but had the benefit of the most careful consideration by other noble Lords. He trusted his noble and learned Friend would see that there was no foundation for his observation. He appealed to him whether he thought it founded in truth and justice, and whether he ought to have pressed it forward on an occasion like the present. With regard to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, also, his noble and learned Friend had made some observations. He had contended for a change, on the ground that the House of Lords could always obtain the assistance of the judges in coming to their conclusions. Did his noble and learned Friend forget the judgments that had been given in committees of the Privy Council by such authorities as Lord Stowell and Sir W. Grant? His noble Friend called upon them to abolish that tribunal, whereas their Lordships, within only a very few years, had thought fit to extend its jurisdiction, and to establish it on a more solid basis. The constitution of that tribunal appeared to him to be admirably adapted to the consideration of the subjects that were brought before it. Questions were brought before it involving almost every kind of law on the face of the earth. There was the colonial law, every kind of European law, every kind of Eastern law, Spanish law, French law, both according to the new code and the old, Dutch law, English law, both common law and equity, the colonial statutes; and, in addition to these, the Oriental law, the Indian law, and the Mahomedan law. There was also the ecclesiastical law. The constitution of the tribunal was admirably adapted to the purpose of dealing with questions embracing so vast a range of judicial knowledge. There were judges of England to decide on questions of common law, and the equity judges to decide upon matters of equity. There were the judges of the ecclesiastical courts to decide upon questions arising out of the ecclesiastical law; and with regard to Eastern law, there were among the Judicial Committee two hon. and learned individuals who had filled the highest judicial situations in the East, and who were able to give advice to the committee on questions connected with Oriental law. His noble and learned Friend had alluded to a difficulty in bringing the members of this tribunal together. He was not aware of any such difficulty—he had never heard of it. It might happen now and then on particular occasions that they could not constitute a court, because the particular individuals required for it were engaged in their occupations, the judges being summoned according to their official acquaintance with the subjects to be brought before them. But the strongest argument against his noble and learned Friend was, that the committee of the Privy Council had given satisfaction, perfect and entire. But then his noble and learned Friend said, that they only sat thirty or forty days, which he contended was not enough for the due discharge of the business brought before them. It appeared, however, that there was now no arrear in the business of the committee. There were only eight or nine appeals now standing for hearing, and he believed there would not have been even that arrear had it not been for the circumstance that certain East Indian cases had stood over because there was no person to prosecute them. This difficulty had now been removed; and he was sure that, in future, the Court would go on, as it was now proceeding, and in a manner perfectly satisfactory to the suitors who awaited its decisions. With regard to the voluntary attendance of those who formed this tribunal, he was not disposed to say anything. When he found a system working well, and the public satisfied with it, he was one of those who would not be inclined to introduce any change. It had been said by a great man, that no change should be made in a law, unless the alteration which was proposed was demonstrably better. He was willing to subscribe to this view, for he was not disposed to change for the sake of change. But he was not surprised that the noble and learned Lord should have come down to the House with this proposition; he had led a life of continuous activity, and having now little occupation, he appeared desirous to devote himself to the introduction of alterations in the laws of his country.

"Quod petiit, spernit; repetit quod nuper omisit;
Æstuat, et vitæ disconvenit ordine toto;
Diruit, ædificat, mutat quadrata rotundis."

But, after all, the proposition of the noble and learned Lord possessed little novelty, for it was very like a scheme which had been already introduced to the House by a noble and learned Friend of his (Lord Cottenham), but which, after having been debated, was rejected by a large majority. Turning now to what had been said with regard to that House, he should say that there never was a moment when it was less necessary to interfere with the appellate jurisdiction of this House. Four noble and learned Lords constantly devoted their attention to the business of appeals, and nothing could advance better than their appellate jurisdiction. But then it had been said that it was monstrous that there should be two co-ordinate appellate jurisdictions—those of the House of Lords and of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. But they were not co-ordinate in every sense, because the jurisdiction of one of them went to certain parts of the empire, while that of the other extended to another. It was urged, too, how dangerous it would be if the two tribunals came to different and conflicting decisions. The Privy Council had sat for two hundred years, and in no one instance had there arisen any conflict between its decisions and those of the House of Lords; so that, practically, no inconvenience whatever had arisen upon this point. Various propositions had been made with respect to the office of Lord Chancellor. First, it had been suggested that the Chancellor should be cut in half, and that one portion of him should sit in the Court of Chancery, and the other in that House. Then, again, it had been suggested that he should be placed in a sort of easy chair, between two assessors. Then the noble and learned Lord (Lord Brougham) had proposed to take away the jurisdiction of the Lord Chancellor and give it to the Privy Council; and now the noble Lord (Lord Campbell) wanted to take away the jurisdiction of the Privy Council, and give it to that House. Such different and incongruous views did learned Lords take of the same question when they came to consider it, with the object of effecting some alteration. For his own part, he said, that the present system worked well; and, while such was the case, it would be a wild and useless task to attempt to effect a new regulation. Then as to the time of the sitting of the House. He had never heard, that the present plan was attended with any practical inconvenience. How was it with the courts of common law? In the month of June every year they ceased to sit for the purpose of deciding questions of law, and they did not reopen their courts for the same purpose until the month of November—a period of four months and a half. But what was the difference? These courts did not sit more than seventy days in the year for deciding questions of law, while this House actually sat one hundred days for the same purpose. The noble and learned Lord had suggested an extended period of sitting of the House; and that the House might be summoned specially for this purpose. This, however, could not be done without an alteration of the whole constitution of Parliament being effected: and the consequences would be, not only the inconvenience resulting from this innovation, but that during the regular sitting of the House the Lord Chancellor would be altogether absorbed with his political duties, and that the judicial business of Parliament would be disposed of by him and the two or three law Lords whose feelings might prompt them to attend for the purpose of considering the appeals: and the effect would be, that in the course of a very little time this tribunal would be deemed not the appellate tribunal of the House of Lords, but as an appellate tribunal sitting within the walls of the House of Lords. It had been said, that the weight of their Lordships' House depended upon their judicial authority. That authority had been firmly established, and he hoped that they would not allow it to be taken from them, or lessened, or permit their power to be lowered in the consideration of the country—an object which some persons were desirous of effecting; but that they would endeavour, on the other hand, to support that power and authority which the country deemed of so much importance. He was not then enabled to go into the details of the bill, but he trusted, when it should come to be fully considered, he would be able to show that it was not one deserving of the confidence of their Lordships' House, and he did not think when it became known to the profession, it would receive their support.

Lord *Cottenham* had listened with great attention to the proposition of his noble and learned Friend; and, not having been aware of the nature of the proposition, he had been anxious to hear the remedy he proposed for the evils of the present system of appellate jurisdiction. As his noble and learned Friend proceeded, he found much to approve of in what he had stated, and he had been not a little surprised that his noble and learned Friend had proposed to their Lordships a measure similar to that which he (Lord Cottenham) had proposed in 1836, and he hoped that it would meet with more success. His proposition had been rejected by their Lordships on the second reading of the bill by a very considerable majority, and from that time he had never had any encouragement from the House to renew his proposition. He had had in view two great objects:—one, the appointment of a permanent head to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council; the other, the appointment of a permanent head to the Court of Chancery. He had always felt, that the measure of his noble Friend (Lord Brougham) constituting the Judicial Commitee had been defective, because that court had not a head responsible for the proceedings in that court. He did not consider any judicial establishment in this country properly filled unless there was some person whose duty it was to preside over it, and be responsible for the business transacted in it. He had always felt likewise, that in the Court of Chancery there should be some individual who should direct his whole attention to the judicial business; and it had appeared to him that, with the force of that court, previous to the late act, without any additional judges, it could have kept down the arrears and disposed of the current business of suitors, if it had had a permanent head. His proposition was, that the Lord Chancellor should preside in all appeals in that House, and also in the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. He did not propose to remove the judicial business of that House to the Privy Council, nor the business of the Privy Council to that House. It was unnecessary to do either one or the other, for if the great law officer was placed at the head of both, both would have the advantage of his great talents and experience, and he would direct the business of both. True it was, that his bill provided, that the House should sit for judicial business, notwithstanding the prorogation of Parliament, and he believed, that that part of the bill had united many of their Lordships against it; and, if he had renewed the bill, he should have omitted that part of it; for, upon a calculation he had made, he had found, that all the objects he had had in view could be effected without it. There would be no difficulty in getting rid of all the appeals if the Lord Chancellor had no other business to attend to than the judicial business before the House, and when the House was not sitting, he might apply his attention to the business before the Judicial Committee; so that it would not be necessary that the Session should be prolonged. To the extent, therefore, of a proposition to give to the Court of Chancery a head, and which should not take the Lord Chancellor out of the court to exercise jurisdiction elsewhere, and to give a permanent head to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, he should be ready and anxious to give his support. But it appeared to him a most unfortunate time to make such a proposition, for an act had recently passed, making an alteration in the establishment of the Court of Chancery, in order to dispose of arrears in that court, and that experiment had not yet been tried. The noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack had said, that a greal deal had been done, and that a large proportion of the arrears had been got rid of; but the noble and learned Lord could not calculate what a few years more, or even a few months might effect; yet in a few months after the experiment was begun, his noble and learned Friend proposed to take away one of the judges of the court to which two judges had been added. It might be, that in due time, everything would be done in the Court of Chancery, and that no suitor would be waiting for a judge to hear his cause; but, till that took place, the establishment of that court should be left in the situation in which it was placed by the bill of last Session. Whilst the experiment was going on, it would not be wise to interfere with it, and undo in February what had been done in September.

Lord *Brougham* would take another opportunity of stating in detail what occurred to him upon his noble and learned Friend's bill. Nevertheless, and notwithstanding the observations of the noble and learned Lord, he would take leave to make a few observations on the present occasion. As to the proceedings in the Court of Chancery, it was true he had been of opinion and still continued to be, that two judges were not wanted. He had always, believed, and contended, that the arrear was only temporary, and that as soon as it was once got rid of, one additional judge would be sufficient; though he thought even one would prove unnecessary now as his noble and learned Friend had stated, the great arrears in the Court of Chancery existed no longer. The bill was passed in September; it came into operation in November. Four months including the Christmas recess had sufficed to get rid of all arrears. In November there were 508 causes in arrear; upwards of 200 new causes had been since set down for hearing; it was now stated that there were but 132 ready for hearing, of which thirty-two had been set down in the month of February. Not only was there no longer any arrear of the 508 causes, but there were 100 over and above the arrears, which the court had disposed of being ready to take the rest in the ordinary course. It had been said by many practical men, that it would take years and years to clear off the arrears, and yet they had been swept away in not many weeks. Then there were the speculations of his noble Friend, that there would be an increase of business in the court; that if the channel were cleared the stream would enlarge in proportion to the width given to it. Now in the year 1832, there were no arrears, not only in matters of appeal but in original causes. When he (Lord Brougham) rose at Christmas, 1831, there was no cause ready for hearing in his court. But, so too, there was no arrear in the other branches of the court. So was it with Sir John Leach, a judge who could not be named without commending the diligence with which he discharged his duties; nor was there any arrear at that time before his right hon. and learned Friend, the Vice-Chancellor. The consequence was, as might have been expected from the removal of the obstructions, there was an increase in the number of bills filed, but that did not last; the removal of the obstruction caused a momentary rush of business, but there was not a constant stream; in a few months the usual number of bills alone were filed. So now, again, there was a rush, which his noble and learned Friend estimated at 30 per cent, but it was only 25 per cent., and he did not think that this was likely to continue; 15 per cent. appeared to him to be the utmost extent of the permanent increase that would arise. Yet, even an increase of 25 per cent. would not justify the appointment of judges which virtually doubled the judicial power of the court. It was increasing the judicial power eight times more than the occasion required. With respect to the particular measure then before their Lordships, he thought that many of the objections taken to the present system were inherent or unavoidable. He did not, agree in thinking that there would be no evil in having judges sitting in an appellate court only; he was sure that all experience in England was in favour of judges not being confined to an appellate jurisdiction, but sitting also in courts of the first instance, although he was aware that the case was different in other countries, and particularly in the

Court of Cassation in France, where the law was well administered. As to the judicial power of the Privy Council, the want of a permanent head as his noble and learned Friend stated was an evil; at the same time it was true, as the noble and learned Lord said, that this was more apparent than real. His noble Friend (Lord Campbell), was mistaken in supposing that he (Lord Brougham) as the senior judge present presided. No one presided in this court; but, properly speaking, each judge took a cause in rotation, which had been productive of an admirable effect, for it ensured the full attention of each of the learned persons, it prevented the three judges from throwing the whole work on the president, and it had proved satisfactory to the suitors both here and in the colonies. The want of a bar had been also made a point of objection by his noble and learned Friend; but he was much afraid that no change in the constitution of the appellate tribunal would ever remedy this defect. For suppose that according to the plan proposed they were sitting here upon appeal causes from Scotland, and other places in the United Kingdom, and that the same court should also sit upon appeals from the Court of Admiralty and the Consistorial Court, one bar would be found to attend only to one branch, and the other bar would only attend when the House should be sitting upon the other class of cases, and so of colonial and Indian appeals. Now as to the appellate business being sufficient to occupy a full court nearly the entire year, he found, upon looking into the number of days which the judicial committee of the Privy Council sat, that not above forty days was the average number of their sitting; and it would appear, from the returns which had been made to this House, that that number of days was perfectly sufficient to transact all the business, because there were absolutely no arrears in that court. The returns before the House showed that, even including appeals from the East Indies, there were only eight or nine remaining, of which one had been part heard, another had only been set down in February, and a third about the same time; so that there were only six cases to hear, and of these five were from native courts of India, which was a new branch of business. Formerly there were Indian native appeals of thirty or thirty-five years' standing when the judicial committee began; that heavy weight of arrears had been got rid of. The other causes standing for hearing were as follows:—From the Supreme Courts of India one; from the Ecclesiastical Courts, three; from the Admiralty Court, none; and from all the colonies in the East, the Cape, Australia, the West-Indies, and North-America, not one single cause remained to be heard. Therefore, he said, there was not any arrear at all. It followed then that forty days in the year was quite sufficient to enable the judicial committee of the Privy Council to transact all its business, and more than sufficient, for this number had sufficed to work off the arrears also. And forty days thus being the outside required for performing the whole appellate business of the Privy Council, there remained for consideration the number of days necessary for carrying on the jurisdiction of the House of Peers. [The *Lord Chancellor*, Sixteen days in the month.] Surely his noble Friend was mistaken, they did not sit four days in each week. He thought that three days in each week was the average number of their sittings. It was a question between seventy and eighty. He would take it at the highest. This would make the number of sittings amount to about eighty, to which, if they added the forty days' sittings of the judicial committee of the Privy Council, they would make the whole number amount to 120 days for the sittings of both tribunals throughout the year. Now this would not occupy any one set of judges; they would have only work for twenty weeks in the year. His noble and learned Friend had observed that there was a very great objection to a judge holding high judicial functions being removable. He agreed with him that it would be better, if possible, to remedy this evil, but, notwithstanding this objection upon the part of his noble and learned Friend, the highest judge of all, by his own plan, would be removable. The Lord Chancellor would, of course, preside as the highest judge, and would, of course, be liable to removal. Another objection had been taken to this judicial committee, and that was, that the attendance was voluntary. But what was the attendance of the court which his noble and learned Friend proposed by his plan? Why, it was proposed to make the attendance voluntary also; so that the proposition of his noble and learned Friend was itself exposed to those two great objections which he complained of, and made the main ground of bringing it forward—namely, a judge removable and the attendance voluntary. They found, after all that had been said upon the matter, that in practice the new tribunals had worked so well for the last nine years as to give the greatest satisfaction to suitors both in the colonies and elsewhere; and not only to have no arrear of business on hand, but to have actually got rid of all the arrears which had been previously allowed to accumulate, as well as to have dispatched all the subsequently accruing business from various quarters of the world. Though, then, there might be some objection to the constitution of the tribunal, he nevertheless thought that those objections were more in theory than practice; for, undoubtedly, the system had worked extremely well in practice. There was a very great difficulty in forming what might be called a good appellate tribunal, and that argument with respect to this difficulty derived greater force from the failure of all those plans which had been heretofore tried upon the subject. First, the plan which had been proposed by his noble and learned Friend near him (Lord Cottenham) had been found very objectionable. The plan which had been proposed by the present Lord Chancellor of Ireland was also found extremely unacceptable to those persons to whom it had been submitted. The plan which he (Lord Brougham) had brought forward upon the subject for transferring the appeals from this House to the Privy Council had met with no greater favour, and after the failure of all those plans, his noble and learned Friend (Lord Campbell) now proposed his measure in the shape of three bills. If he were to risk a prophecy upon the present plan, he would say that his noble and learned Friend's measure was very likely to fail also. He would not say that it would be likely to fail if it were allowed to pass into a law—he did not mean to convey this meaning, that if this plan were brought to the test of experience it would not work well. He did not mean to go so far as that. He could not carry his vision to that extent, because he could not see that it was very likely the noble and learned Lord's plan would ever arrive at that stage which would enable any person to say whether the measure had failed in its practical operation or not. He feared that the measure of his noble and learned Friend would not have the fate of the measure of his other noble and learned Friend, (Lord Cottenham) who had, with the aid of his noble Friend on the Woolsack, succeeded in making his measure the law of the land. That measure had succeeded so well that it not only answered his expectations, but greatly exceeded them. It had more than verified his fears, for it had defeated its own object by its excessive success. With respect to having one appellate jurisdiction, instead of two, the danger to be apprehended was, their having conflicting decisions—not upon matters of fact, but upon matters of law. If they had two tribunals in the last resort, neither having any jurisdiction over the other, but both being supreme, they certainly ran the hazard of having conflicting decisions. That this had not happened in former times proved nothing; for then the decisions of the Privy Council possessed not the importance now attached to them since the new jurisdiction. Nevertheless, this was to be taken into account, that though each of those courts was so far supreme that one could not interfere with the decisions of the other, still the decisions of the one came to be authority in the other, and were so cited. So far, therefore, this had a tendency to keep the courts together more or less. He thought a remedy might be found for that evil, for evil, indeed, it would be, if it did exist—the greatest evil that could possibly exist in the jurisprudence of any country, for, as it had been well said, the greatest of all slavery was that of a vague and uncertain law. Upon the whole he should, before he finally made up his mind upon the plans of his noble and learned Friend, wish to have an opportunity of examining more narrowly their details. As he was at present advised, he was inclined to think that many of the evils which his noble and learned Friend (Lord Campbell) complained of would be found more in theory than practically existing. At any rate, he was quite certain that some of those evils which were real were inevitable, and necessary to any such system of jurisprudence as at present existed.

Lord *Campbell* said, he did not mean then to prolong the discussion, as he thought it might take place more advantageously on the second reading of the bills. But he was anxious to free himself from any purposed discourtesy, in not having more fully communicated his scheme to his noble and learned Friends. He had publicly announced in the House his intention to bring the subject forward, and it was quite familiar to all his noble and learned Friends, who had each a scheme of his own. Notwithstanding the objections started, he trusted the necessity would be seen, for having only one Court of Appeal in the last resort, and that all the rest would be approved of, as necessarily following. He must just notice a remark of his noble and learned Friend on the Woolsack, indicating, that he had prepared and brought forward these bills merely *pour écarter l'ennui*. He begged leave to remind the House, that law reform was not new to him; that in his busiest time, he had sent up from the Commons, various bills for the improvement of the law, which had met the approbation of their Lordships, and were now to be found in the statute-book. He hoped he knew, as well as his noble and learned Friend, how to employ his leisure for the benefit of his country. He was glad to find, that his noble and learned Friend who sat near him (Lord Brougham) kept his mind open to consider the merits of the scheme, and he could not but hope, that the more it was considered and understood, the more it would be approved of and supported.

Lord *Brougham* must set his noble and learned Friend on the Woolsack, right as to the noble Mover of these bills having brought them forward from want of other occupation. No man in the profession had ever laboured harder in reforming the law than he (Lord Campbell) had done. He (Lord Brougham) should be most ungrateful, were he ever to forget the valuable services rendered by him when most fully occupied at the Bar, he (Lord Campbell) had been chairman of the real property commissions (one of the two commissions issued by the Government in consequence of his motion in 1828), and to his (Lord Campbell's) labours, and those of the other able and learned Commissioners, the country was mainly indebted for those bills carried through Parliament in 1833, by his noble Friend (Lord Lyndhurst) and himself. The Will Bill of 1837, came from the same commission, and it had been altered in this House so as to be made word for word as the commission carried it.

Bills severally read a first time.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, March 1, 1842.

MINUTES.] BILLS. *Public.*—2°· Buildings Regulations (No. 2); Boroughs Improvement (No. 2).

3°· and passed:—Apprentices Regulation.

Private.—1°· Drogheda Harbour.

2°· Mitford's Divorce; Stanhope and Tyne Railroad.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Mr. Williams, from Coventry, Mr. W. Ellis, from Bethnall Green, Mr. Wallace, from Renfrew, Sir G. Strickland, from Bath, and a number of other hon. Members, from several places, for the Repeal of the Corn-laws.—By Captain Taylor, from Meath, and Mr. Trench, from Roscommon, for Protection on Oats.—By Lord Duncan, from Covent Garden, St. Ann's, Westminster, and St. Mary's, Kensington, for the Redemption of the Tolls on the Metropolitan Bridges.—By Mr. S. Crawford, Dr. Stock, and Mr. E. Tennent, from Congregations of Dissenters (Ireland), to Legalize certain Marriages by Dissenters.—By Mr. Wallace, from Paisley, for means of Emigrating to Canada.—By Sir C. Napier, from Mr. Houghton, for certain Improvements in her Majesty's Navy.—From Almeley, for Amendment of Poor-law Act.—From Peebles, for Settlement of Scotch Church.—From Glenavy, relating to Education in Ireland.

FINANCIAL POLICY.] Mr. *Wallace*, seeing the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government in his place, wished to put a question to him, for which he really felt an excuse was necessary. He was exceedingly pressed by his own constituents, and from various other quarters, to endeavour to elicit from the right hon. Baronet—now that the resolutions on the Corn-laws had passed through committee—at what time it was probable that he could announce the commercial alterations which he was about to propose. He really begged pardon. He was afraid he was pressing on the right hon. Gentleman, but it would be a great satisfaction if he could now name the probable day on which that communication would be made to the House.

Sir *R. Peel* said, the position of the hon. Gentleman, and the circumstances of that portion of the country with which he was connected, rendered any apology for his question unnecessary. But he was afraid he could say in answer to it little more than he had already said. It was certainly true that the Corn-law resolutions had gone through committee at half-past one that morning, and he hoped they might be reported that day. In that expectation he had fixed the army and navy estimates for Friday, and he would do all in his power to expedite the Committee of Supply. But notice had been given him on the previous evening, that on the report various motions would be made, which might preclude his bringing up the report on the resolutions that evening, if the other business should occupy the time of the House to too late an hour. He would do all in his power to bring up the report that evening, to give an opportunity for bringing in the bill founded on the resolutions. But if he were unable to do it that evening, there would probably be no opportunity before Friday; therefore he would only say, that he had fixed the Committee of Supply for the earliest day, and that, having obtained a vote in supply, he would take the earliest opportunity of naming a day for the Committee of Ways and Means.

SYRIA.] Sir *C. Napier* hoped the right hon. Baronet would pardon him for giving him so much trouble about Syrian matters, but he took so deep an interest in the unfortunate people of that country, that he could not refrain from repeating a question he had already put—Whether the right hon. Baronet had received information of the deposition of the Emir Beschir, of his arrival at Constantinople, and of the appointment of two Turkish pachas in his stead, of whom one was an Austrian renegade? The people of Syria had been most cruelly and shamefully treated by the Turkish Government.

Sir *R. Peel* said, that from the distinguished part which the hon. and gallant Officer had taken in reference to Syria, and the interest which he naturally felt in its affairs, no question of his on the subject could require an apology. When the hon. and gallant Officer formerly put the question, the Government was not then in possession of official information from Beyrout, but they had since received a despatch, from which it appeared that the Emir Beschir had been deposed, and had arrived at Constantinople. It was also true that Omar Pacha, who had been formerly in the Austrian service, was appointed in his place.

Sir *C. Napier:* I can only say I am extremely sorry to hear it.

MAGISTRACY OF YORK.] Mr. *R. Yorke* begged to put a question to the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Home Department, which it was necessary to preface by a short statement. About six weeks or two months before the secession of the late ministry from office, representations were made of the inadequacy of the local magistracy of the city of York. The Government proceeded to supply the deficiency, and, amongst others, Mr. Mills, a gentleman of irreproachable character, elevated position, and independent fortune, was specified in the commission. But it happened that his name was John Robert Mills, while he was entitled in the commission John Mills. It was suggested that the commission should be sent back to be corrected; but it was stated that that was impossible. Since then a commission had been named by the present Government, including three gentlemen, all Conservatives. With respect to two of these gentlemen, a similar informality occurred, but there was no difficulty in sending the commission back to have it set right. He wanted to know why the same thing could not have been done in the case of Mr. Mills.

Sir *James Graham* said, that the circumstance alluded to by the hon. Gentleman was made known to him then for the first time. If the hon. Gentleman would repeat his question to-morrow, or communicate with him in private, he would make inquiries on the subject.

CHURCH EXTENSION.] Mr. *Hawes* begged to ask the hon. Baronet the Member for the University of Oxford, whether he intended to bring forward the subject of Church Extension before Easter?

Sir *R. Inglis* said, it was his intention to call the attention of Parliament to the subject of Church Extension during the present Session. It was not his intention to bring it on before Easter, and he should give the House and the hon. Member sufficient notice of the time at which he should bring it forward.

IMPORTATION OF AMERICAN FLOUR—THE SIDDONS.] Sir *R. Peel* said: A question was put to me yesterday evening, by an hon. Member opposite, which, at the time, I was unable to answer. I was afraid, that I had lost the paper from which I had quoted the fact relating to the passage of the Siddons, which the hon. Member seemed to doubt. However, I now hold it in my hand, and will read it to the House; it is as follows:—

"An order was sent from Liverpool to New York for 1,000 barrels of flour. It was sent on the 1st of August by steam, from the house of Ogden, Ferguson, and company, was shipped in the Siddons, and arrived in Liverpool on the 12th of September."

The paper is, I believe, in the handwriting of the person who sent the order. It will be seen, therefore, that if there has been a mistake, it did not originate with me.

Mr. *Thorneley* read an extract from a letter witten by a Liverpool merchant, who had imported flour in the Siddons. The gentleman alluded to, went out himself to America in the August steam-packet, and stated, that his flour shipped by the Siddons did not arrive in Liverpool till the 24th September, making fifty-one days. If the order alluded to by the right hon. Baronet had been sent out by the Liverpool, it was clear that it referred to some previous voyage of the Siddons.

FRENCH POSSESSIONS IN AFRICA.] Mr. *Sheil* begged to ask the right hon. Baronet, the first Lord of the Treasury, whether the statement made on the 19th of January in the Chamber of Deputies, by M. Guizot, regarding a particular conversation which took place between him and Lord Aberdeen, in reference to the French Possessions in Africa, was correct.

Sir *Robert Peel* said, I think the right hon. Gentleman ought not to put a question upon a matter of such great importance, without previous notice [Mr. *Sheil* made some observation across the Table]. I do not want notice now. I can answer the question, but I think notice ought to be given upon a matter of such importance as anything must be which relates to our intercourse with the government of France. I am bound to say, that my noble Friend does not admit the entire accuracy of the version which M. Guizot has given of the conversations to which the right hon. Gentleman refers. I do not know that there is any substantial difference, but my noble Friend does not admit having used the phrase that he had "no objections to the retention of the possession of Algiers." The expression which he used was, that he had no observations to make on that subject.

PRISON DISCIPLINE.] Mr. *Thomas Duncombe* rose to move for a select committee, to inquire into the rules, regulations, and discipline of the several gaols and houses of correction in England and Wales; to report what alterations appear to be necessary in the laws now in force for the government of the prisons, in order to insure a more uniform system of discipline throughout the whole; and further, to report upon the expediency of abolishing the infliction of corporal punishments upon criminal offenders. He should be glad if the Government entertained no doubt of the propriety of acceding to his notice. It would save the time of the House, and it would spare him the pain of making, and the House of hearing, statements which must create feelings of great sorrow and concern. But looking to the vast importance of the subject, he thought the Government were right in calling on him to state his reasons for asking the House to agree to his motion. In doing so he hoped, at all events, whatever might be the difference of political opinions, that as he brought forward this question with no hostile feeling to any one, so would no party feeling enter into the discussion, or influence a single vote in the decision. He was well aware, that any one who called the attention of the House to the prison discipline of the country, whether he censured the present system as too severe, or said that in some points it was not severe enough, must be exposed on the one hand, to the imputation of having a culpable indulgence and sympathy with vice; or, on the other hand, that he was not susceptible enough to human suffering, and did not make allowances enough for human frailty. The question that he was about to bring under their notice was one that had excited much public attention in consequence of the reports which had been made during the last five years by those individuals who were appointed by the late Government under the authority of Parliament as inspectors of prisons. He wished not to say one word against those reports; he thought they were drawn up with an accuracy and an ability which did the greatest credit to those who framed them. But there was another reason why this subject excited so great an interest in the country. During the last two or three years, the House would recollect that some 300 or 400 persons had been confined in our prisons for what were termed political offences. They were a different race of men from those who generally filled our prisons and houses of correction. They were men of more intelligence and greater ability; they had seen, felt, and witnessed the deplorable scenes which occurred in many of our prisons; they had called not only his attention, but the attention of a great portion of the community to what they saw, and they anxiously urged a strict and rigid investigation into the Government and discipline of those prisons. He should be doing the Legislature great injustice, and former Governments great injustice, if he were not to say, that great improvement had been made in our prison discipline during the last twenty years. When they looked back to those days when benevolent individuals, such as that great philanthropist Mr. Howard, whose name would never be mentioned without gratitude and respect, discovered and made known the existence of frightful disease in our prisons, destroying life more than the scaffold, and when they considered how much smaller was the number of deaths in prisons at present, they had a right to consider that great improvements had been made. With respect to the committee for which he was about to ask, there were precedents without end, both in that House and the other House of Parliament, for instituting such inquiries. In 1822, a committee was appointed in consequence of general complaints made of the administration of the law, and the management of prisons. The result was, the enactment of what was commonly called the Gaol Act. The Gaol Act classified prisons and introduced other great improvements. Things remained in that state till 1832, when the House thought proper to appoint another committee to inquire into the working of prison discipline at that time; that committee reported, that it was necessary, that greater uniformity of discipline should be observed in the prisons of this country, and that it would lead not only to the interests of justice, but to the welfare of prisoners, if such a system were adopted. Nothing was done in consequence of that report. In 1835, a committee was appointed by the House of Lords, and that committee reported a resolution to the effect,

> "That it was expedient that one uniform system of prison discipline be established in every gaol and house of correction in England and Wales. That for the sake of procuring such uniformity of discipline, it was expedient that all rules and regulations of gaols should be in future submitted to the Secretary of State for his approval, instead of (as at present) to the judges of assize."

The committee also recommended the appointment of inspectors, and inspectors were accordingly appointed. He admitted, that these inspectors had introduced many improvements, but still he must maintain that very great cruelties were exercised in prisons, and much yet remained to be done to improve them. He thought, the importance of this question was greatly increased by the great increase of crime which had taken place within the last ten years in this country. Of course her Majesty's Government were well aware of the amount of that increase, but he did not believe that the House or the public were aware of its extent. Therefore, with the permission of the House, he would state what the increase amounted to. By the report of the committee of 1832, it appeared that the commitments to prison during the seven years, previous to 1817, amounted to 56,308, averaging 8,044 annually. During the seven succeeding years, or from 1817 to 1824, the number of commitments was 92,848, averaging 13,264 annually. During the next seven years, or those from 1824 to 1831, the number had risen to 121,518, averaging 17,359 annually. He would now come to the report of the inspector of prisons, and take the last three years to which they extended—1838, 1839, and 1840. The House would recollect, that during the seven years previous to 1831, the number of persons committed was 121,518, being on an average 17,359 in each year. In 1838, in one year alone, the number imprisoned according to reports of the inspectors was 112,515. In 1839, the number was 112,812, being a difference of only 297 between the two years. But in 1840, the last year for which we had a return, the number amounted to 129,237, being an increase of more than 16,000 over the year 1838, and of between 600 and 700 per cent, above the average commitments in the ten years preceding 1831, while our population during the same period had only increased about 14 per cent. Surely this was a most alarming state of the criminal population of this country. That crime was increasing in this manner, was a most alarming fact; and if it could not be controverted, it was certainly deserving of the inquiry and investigation of Parliament. Along with the increase of the number of persons committed, there had been, of course, considerable increase in the expense of gaols, The expense during the year 1840, exceeded that of 1838, by more than 64,000*l.* The House might naturally ask, what could be the reason of this vast increase of crime. So far as he could judge it was owing partly to ignorance—to the want of education amongst the people—to the want of employment, which produced poverty and distress, and, in some instances, to intemperance on the part of those who had the means of gratifying their passions. The want of education amongst the people would be found from several returns made by the registrar of births and marriages. They would find, that out of 121,000 marriages which had taken place during the last year, there were 40,587 males, and 58,959 females who could not write their names. The report also stated, the remarkable fact, that the chief deficiency existed in Lancashire, Bedfordshire, and Monmouthshire. In Bedfordshire, the number of men who signed with their marks was 55 per cent, and of females 66 per cent. It might be said, that this did not apply to the criminal population. There were other returns, however, which did. Out of 129,000 persons who were committed in 1840, there were 35,552 who could neither read nor write; out of 65,000 persons summarily convicted, there were 26,238 persons who could neither read nor write, 13,644 who could read only, and 21,483 who could write very imperfectly. The criminal returns included several species of crime. A large proportion of commitments appear to be made under the Vagrant Act. There was one offence for which a number of individuals were sent to gaol, and he wished some means could be devised to prevent such persons from being so sent. He alluded to individuals confined for what was called insubordination in workhouses. These individuals, according to the returns made, had been treated in a manner most cruel and severe—he might say, in some prisons, most brutal, for what was really a venial offence. A pamphlet, written by Mr. Pigou, contained extracts from the inspectors reports, stating some of the worst of these cases, and accompanied by very just and able comments. In the Ipswich prison, according to the fourth report of the inspector, seven youths were found in solitary confinement for insubordination or misconduct in the workhouse. He would read an extract from the report on this subject. The hon. Gentleman then read the following extract from the "Fourth Report of the Inspector of Prisons for the Northern and Eastern Districts:"—

"In the dark cell for the refractory, I found a prisoner lying upon the floor, who had been there for several days upon bread and water. One of the turnkeys in charge of him states, 'This prisoner was committed on the 14th of December for two months, for breaking windows in the union workhouse. One of the turnkeys brought him to me on Tuesday, about a fortnight ago, and told me I was to keep him in the refractory cell all the time he had to stay here. I asked him a day or two afterwards, how long he was to be kept there, and he told me for the remainder of his time. I understood he had been making a noise in the night.' The keeper states, 'I took him before the magistrate for refractory conduct, and was ordered to put him into another cell. I had no written order for continuing him in the dark cell so long.' In another part of the prison, I found seven youths in solitary confinement, who had been committed for refractory conduct in a union poor-house. They made the following statements, which proved to be correct:—

"W. E., aged 19—Has been here seven weeks, and is sentenced to four months' imprisonment. Has only seen the keeper twice; the chaplain and surgeon have never been to him; can read and write; has no book; takes exercise for ten minutes or a quarter of an hour in the morning, when let down to wash; he has 1½lb. of bread, and a quart of gruel daily.

"W. G., aged 16—Has been here seven weeks, been neither visited by chaplain nor surgeon, is sentenced to two months' imprisonment, can read, but has no books.

"I. M., aged 17—Can read, has a book which was given him by one of the other prisoners, through the ventilation holes of the cell, when he was sleeping below, has been ill, and seen the doctor twice, has seen the governor twice, but not in his cell.

"O. G., aged 17.—Can read but has no book, has neither been visited by chaplain nor surgeon, sees the governor about once a week.

"W. G., aged 16.—Can read but has no books, has never seen the chaplain during the seven weeks he has been here, the surgeon has seen him twice when sick.

"E. S., aged 16.—Can read but has no book, has never been visited by the chaplain or surgeon, has seen the keeper twice.

"T. D., age 18.—Cannot read, has neither been visited by chaplain nor surgeon, has seen the governor occasionally.

"These prisoners were at first placed upon bread and water, but have since been allowed a quart of gruel in addition. Upon questioning the chaplain why these prisoners were not visited by him, and were unprovided with books, he stated, 'The order, as I understand from the keeper, relative to these boys, is, that I am not to visit them, nor are they to have books; in fact, they are to see nobody.' The keeper states, 'A magistrate directed me verbally not to permit these prisoners from the poor-house to be visited by the chaplain."

The magistrate, he knew not why, had taken upon him to direct the gaoler, not to allow any one to see these unfortunate prisoners. They were placed in a dark cell, and made to live on bread and water, without the authority of any act of Parliament that he could find, giving power to a magistrate to issue such directions. The only fault he found in the reports of the inspectors was, that where the conduct of a magistrate had been so illegal as in this case, his name was not given. If a magistrate had done right he ought not to be ashamed to have his name made public, and if he had done wrong he ought to be held up to public condemnation by having his name printed. Moreover, he trusted that her Majesty's Ministers would take care that such an individual was not any longer suffered to disgrace the administration of justice by being connected with it. There was a report made which was most interesting. It was a report made by the chaplain of the house of correction at Lewes. That individual very much to his credit, had taken the pains of investigating what was the parentage and descent of the prisoners who generally filled that gaol. What then does he say of the class of persons who came there? That out of 943 prisoners, felons, vagrants, and misdemeanants, fifty-seven were the children of criminals, twenty-eight were illegitimate, 232 orphans under nine years of age, 133 had been orphans, between nine and sixteen years of age, and twenty-seven had been deserted by their fathers and mothers. He adds—

"Thus it appears that one-fourth of these unhappy individuals were orphans from childhood, and considerably more than one-third either orphans or deserted under the age of sixteen. Of the females very nearly half were such. How many of the rest were the victims of parental neglect, or trained to vice by those who ought to have guarded them from it, it is impossible to say. The foregoing statement surely calls for much compassion towards those who are also the just objects of judicial visitation. Not that their sentences should be rendered more light, which would neither be for their advantage nor safe to the community, but that every possible means of moral advantage should be combined with the strictness of penitentiary inflictions, and that the utmost assistance which discretion will permit should be afforded them on their discharge from prison where a disposition is shown to exchange the ways of crime for those of honest industry. Out of the many reflections which this view excites, one above others, was deeply impressed upon my mind, namely, the great importance of workhouse schools, where so many of these friendless and parentless children of the poor are gathered together. If I be not much mistaken, nowhere can a blow be more effectually aimed at the root of crime. Let these schools be made more numerous, and let them be placed in the hands of enlightened teachers, who with judgment and kindness will open the understandings and engage the affections of their pupils on the side of virtue, then magistrates and prison officers will have less onerous and hopeless duties to discharge."

In another part of his report he strongly reprobated the practice of sending children from the workhouse to the gaol. He said that they ought not to be made the inmates of a gaol, as nothing could follow from sending them thither but contamination, and their future life must be embittered by the reflection. If they went to the manufacturing districts, they could not be surprised to find that crime prevailed in such districts. He was sorry to say that their intemperance was very common. If they took up Captain Williams's report, they would find the statement of what had occurred at Manchester. He said—

"On Saturday, September 5, I accompanied Sir Charles Shaw, who was attended by two intelligent inspectors of the police force, on a walk through Manchester after twelve o'clock. The public houses mostly frequented by disorderly persons were found all open and in full trade at a quarter past twelve, and were only closed on the appearance of the police. They were crowded with men and women, several of the latter with infants in arms, and many of both sexes in a state of intoxication, who became noisy and irritated at what they appear to consider the improper interference of the police. We then proceeded to visit the low lodging-houses and brothels in the part of the town most frequented by the criminal population. They presented the usual scene of indiscriminate connection of the sexes and low dissipation, and I think a more than usual one of filth and wretchedness. Upon descending into a cellar, in which were some half dozen occupants in bed, I was struck by what appeared the unusual sight of the room being papered; but on one of the inspectors lifting up his lantern, I discovered that the appearance was caused by myriads of bugs having been crushed against it, which, in the dim light, presented the appearance of a figured paper."

What a state, he asked, was that, for any portion of the population of this country to be in. Here they saw individuals miserable, utterly neglected, starving—nothing done to solace them in the dreadful condition in which they were placed. But then it might be said that such a horrible state of things was confined to the manufacturing districts. Not at all. It prevailed in some of the rural districts as well. There was one case to which he must refer. He would take the case of Cambridge; and considering that it was the seat of all that was pious and orthodox—considering it was the seat of all that was learned, he said that it was disgraceful that there should be in that town a gaol in the state and description described by the inspector of prisons, Captain Williams. One reason assigned for the gaol not being completed, was, that a Chancery suit was pending; that might be a good reason for closing the doors of the gaol, but was none for continuing its abuses. What he was now talking of was the spinning house. There the gaol act was directly contravened. The gaol act provided, that there should be divine service on the Sabbath-day, and that provision had not been complied with. He would quote a passage from the report:—

"The University has made no provision for any instruction. Some benevolent ladies have occasionally visited the prison; and a clergyman, a member of King's College, some time back, attended voluntarily on a Sunday, but discontinued it for private reasons; since which, no divine service has been performed. This prison appeared, upon first inspection, particularly that portion applied to vagrants, to be in a neglected and uncleanly state; but on a second visit, it was much improved in this particular. There is no sort of discipline maintained; several escapes have taken place. The prisoners are not searched, nor deprived of money, nor any other article. They occasionally climb over the walls of one airing-yard into another; they pass their time huddled round the fires, in obscene talk, or occasionally in singing and dancing. The keeper gives it as his opinion, 'that any girl not very bad, would be far worse on going out than when she came in. He has observed shades of difference, as to feeling their situations, among some of the females upon first coming in, but this has worn off by association.' The confinement has no other effect but that of keeping them out of the streets in term time. The females now come in at a much younger age than formerly; they have generally been servant girls in lodging-houses in the town. The inutility of this establishment cannot be better exemplified than that the number of unfortunate females committed from November 4, 1834, to the day of inspection, 29th of October, 1835, was 66; the number of committals, 176; averaging nearly three commitments of each individual; and the gross amount of imprisonment which they underwent was 2,634 days, averaging 39 days for each."

The statement with respect to the gaol was taken from the fourth report, and, with the exception of divine service being performed on the Sunday, the whole was to be found also in the last report. And then what was the instruction given by the University of Cambridge to the population? The report only said that the instruction given by the University of Cambridge was only to be found in dog-carts filled with religious tracts. That was not his statement; it was the statement to be found in the Inspector's report. If they could impeach that report, if they could prove it to be incorrect, of course then his statement must be incorrect also; but all this only proved the necessity for an inquiry into those abuses. It proved the very necessity of the motion to which he desired them to accede. It proved that there was not a uniformity of system throughout their prisons. It proved that the recommendations of the House of Lords, and their suggestions connected with the appointment of the inspectors had in no way been attended to, and that the inspectors had not been able to enforce uniformity in the different prisons. It was impossible that it should be otherwise; for by the present system visiting magistrates had the power of drawing up certain rules for the regulation of a prison, these rules being submitted to the Secretary of State, and approved of by him, were then enforced in that prison. Another set of visiting magistrates with another prison did the same. Thus, then, there was one set of rules for one prison, a different set of rules for another prison, and the Secretary of State approved of both. He did not blame the Secretary of State, nor the magistrates; but he blamed the Legislature which allowed such a system to prevail, and did not lay down one general rule which should prevail in all their prisons. He believed that if this were done, it would be of the greatest advantage to the ends of justice, as well as to the prisoners themselves. At present, it was totally impossible for a judge, when he sentenced a prisoner, to know what degree of punishment he sentenced the man to; for there was a want of uniformity in every material point in these prisons—in labour, in diet, in its quality as well as its quantity. Let them look to these returns, with regard to the inequality of labour. If an individual were sentenced to hard labour, the nature of the punishment must depend very much upon the number of hours that the individual would have to be on the wheel, on the height of the step, and on the rapidity of the rotation of the wheel. Let it be supposed that a judge in Devonshire sentenced a man to six months' imprisonment and hard labour, and another individual was sentenced to six months' imprisonment and hard labour in Northumberland, it would be found, that though nominally the sentence was the same in both places, there would in practice be a great inequality in the punishment. What would be the inequality in the same sentence? In Exeter the hard labour lasted for six hours and a half in the day, the height of the step was eight inches, the rotation of the number of steps in a minute twenty-four, making an ascent of 3,120 feet by that individual. If that individual had the same punishment to undergo in Newcastle-on-Tyne, the number of hours for labour were eight, the height of the step was ten inches, the steps mounted in a minute were fifty-two, and the ascent performed was 13,866 feet. In Worcester, the hours of labour were ten and a quarter, the height of the steps seven inches and three quarters, the number of steps in a minute forty-eight, and the ascent 12,716 feet during the day. Though the sentence was the same in each of these counties, yet it was plainly much more severe in some than in others. This, surely, was a subject that ought to be investigated, and all must, he was sure, think that one uniform system of labour ought to be established in all their prisons. Then the next question was, how were these individuals fed? It often happened that when the labour was the hardest, the diet was the smallest and the lowest. As to the Bedford house of correction, it would be seen by the sixth report, that there was a great complaint as to the food. In the Bedford house of correction there was allowed per week 224 ozs. of bread, and eight ozs. of cheese, and three pints of beer. In Worcester the labour was hard, but the diet was more than sufficient for one person. It was 172 ozs. of bread, thirty-four ozs. of cheese, two pounds of potatoes, four pints of soup, and one gallon of gruel. It was plain from this, either that the diet at Bedford or Worcester was wrong—that either the one was too great, or the other too small. With regard to Aylesbury, there was a low diet, and there, too, another defect had prevailed, but it had to a certain extent been rectified. It was one that ought not to have existed. It was with regard to the not allowing any extra nourishment to females with children at the breast.

"There is a circumstance connected with the treatment of female prisoners which deserves attention. A woman committed with a child at the breast is permitted to have no more than the ordinary gaol allowance of food for those of her own class, out of which she has to support both herself and her infant. If the father of the child makes any allowance for its maintenance, the mother is permitted to expend it in provisions for her child; but as such an allowance is rarely made, both mothers and children are subjected to very severe privations. There is an entry in the visiting justices' journal, by which it appears that there were nine females with children at the breast at one time in this prison. In other prisons due provision is made for females of this class. In the Coldbath-fields House of Correction, a woman suckling a child is allowed half a pint of milk, and ten ounces of bread per day, in addition to the ordinary gaol allowance of her class. In the Westminster Bridewell, females so circumstanced are allowed half a pint of milk and two-thirds of the allowance of bread per day over and above the prescribed allowance of the class to which she belongs. In most cases the surgeon directs the allowance of food for this description of prisoners, and the matron should, in all such cases, be directed to call his attention to these prisoners on their admission."

This case had been reported to Lord Normanby, and so far rectified, that it was ordered that the surgeon should have a discretionary power to increase the diet; but, he maintained, the surgeon had that power before. Why, he asked, was there not a general rule for such cases? How did they know but that the females who were thus treated were the victims of another law that they had made? They first of all made a law—the new Poor-law, by which they deprived females of the title to obtain that support from the fathers of their children; and then, having done this, they sent the mother to gaol with her child, and they did not leave her enough of sustenance, as the inspector of the prisons said, for one person even without a child. The inspectors of prisons attested the great importance that ought to be attached to the question of diet. The prison discipline in America in this respect was very different from that which prevailed in England. There parties were divided as to the silent and solitary system; but as to the diet it would be found that it was full and sufficient. If they introduced solitary confinement into their gaols, he begged of them also to introduce a better system of diet. There was also a great want of uniformity in our gaols with regard to the powers that gaolers possessed, and the manner in which these powers were used by them. He had got there a statement from an individual who had suffered in one of these prisons, in consequence of the arbitrary treatment of the mere turnkey. In this case the boy, fourteen years of age, was confined for three days in what is called the refractory cell, of Warwick gaol. There, as it appeared, the turnkey, without the authority of the gaoler, put, in the depth of winter, an unfortunate boy into a cellar under ground; there the boy was confined for three days and three nights, and, when removed from it, was so ill that he was unable for three months to be brought to trial; and having in consequence of this treatment lost two of his toes, would now be a cripple for life. In that case the boy had not been tried, and his offence was quarrelling with another boy. There had been an affidavit made in his case. The name of the boy was William Griffiths, the son of William Griffiths living at Birmingham. The affidavit concluded by stating, that not being able to appear and be tried, he was kept in prison for three months, as he could not be carried up to take his trial at the assizes. The hon. Member read the affidavit, and proceeded to say:—Let them take, for instance, what was the consequence of the regulations at Wakefield and Northallerton. At Wakefield there was confined one of those to whom he had before referred—persons suffering for political offences. Amongst them was an individual named John Riding. He was confined in the Wakefield house of correction, and a representation was made to him (Mr. Duncombe) when Lord Normanby was Secretary of State for the Home Department, as to the rules and regulations there. By these rules it appeared that, when an individual came into the yard, he was not allowed to turn his head to the right or the left—he was not allowed even to look to the right or the left—he was not allowed to speak; that he did not object to when men were at work. The unfortunate Riding had been afflicted before he went into the prison with the asthma. When, then, Riding was placed in the yard, not only was he not allowed to turn his head, but he was not permitted to expectorate. Now, in consequence of his having the asthma, it was necessary for him to expectorate, but he was not allowed to do so for twelve weeks. The effect of this was, that Riding's throat and chest became swelled to an enormous extent, and his life was in danger. When the statement of this case was made to him, he confessed he did not believe it to be true. The case was laid before Lord Normanby at the Home-office, and an immediate inquiry was instituted, with a promise that he should be released if the statement proved to be true. The next post brought back the release of the man, and up to this day the man has never recovered his health. Now, that case had occurred in the Wakefield house of correction. With regard, then, to spiritual instruction in those places, he wished to state one circumstance to which he desired to call the attention of an hon. Friend near him (Mr. O'Connell.) In Salford it appeared that last year there were 131 Roman Catholic prisoners confined. The magistrates had made a regulation which ought to have had the effect of permitting prisoners of the Roman Catholic persuasion to have the spiritual assistance of their priests. This regulation was a very proper one, but it was not complied with. The chaplain of the prison, it seemed, had a very strong feeling, amounting almost to an antipathy, against Roman Catholics, which he evinced in the sermons he delivered in the prison. The chaplain, it appeared, preached controversial sermons to the prisoners, not only showing the superiority of Protestants over Roman Catholics, but going much further, and holding, that individuals of that persuasion were persons to be avoided. An instance of the feeling produced was, one of the prisoners suggesting that they should ask the chaplain to preach one of those controversial sermons over again; because, as it was said it would make their Roman Catholic fellow prisoners "as mad as blazes." [*Laughter.*] The House might laugh; but he asked, was this "spiritual instruction?" The rev. Mr. Macartney was the gentleman who made this statement to him, and he complained, that the Roman Catholics, particularly in that prison, were deprived of spiritual aid. There was no guarantee for the clergyman being admitted to the prisoner. If a Roman Catholic prisoner made a request to the gaoler or chaplain, he never could obtain a priest, except upon one or two occasions. On one of these cases being investigated, the chaplain and gaoler admitted, that they did not send for the Roman Catholic clergyman, as they believed the prisoner only wanted to consult him as to his defence. There ought, in his estimation, to be some regular rule, guaranteeing to an individual so situated free access to the prisoners of his own religion. There was another subject, that was a most painful one, to which he wished to call the attention of the House, and which made him particularly anxious that he might succeed with them in pressing for a committee. The subject to which he referred was the infliction of corporal punishment for criminal offences. He asked of the House to express no opinion on the expediency of corporal punishment. He only asked them to institute an inquiry into the subject. He believed most persons who considered this point, thought that the punishment ought not to be inflicted upon adults, while they suggested it might, with leniency, be applied to juvenile delinquents. He believed, however, that all practical men were in favour of abolishing it altogether. He did not know that the House was aware of the numbers that had suffered corporal punishment of late years. It appeared, that in 1838, there were 983 whipped; in 1839, 1,026; and in 1840, the date of the last return, 1,207. This included those who had been sentenced by visiting magistrates as well as by courts of justice. It was quite clear, from the returns, that the numbers of those thus punished were greatly on the increase; for, in 1828, there were 322; in 1829, 336; and in 1830, 284—making for the three years, 942. How, then, did the inspector, Mr. Williams, speak of this practice in his last report?—

"The manner of inflicting corporal punishment in gaols appears very objectionable. I am of opinion the number of lashes, the time of punishment, and the instrument, should be defined, and the attendance of a surgeon rendered imperative by legal enactment. The consequences of such not being the case are, that the keepers of prisons have nearly absolute power in the execution of this sentence, and that the method varies in almost every prison, at least in the great majority of those which come under my observation: for instance, in one, the whipping of prisoners is carried to the utmost extent of severity, and to the number of eight or ten dozen lashes; in another, not more than ten or twelve lashes are given, and with a lightness which makes the sentence nominal. The time when the sentence is to be carried into effect is also generally left to the discretion of the keeper. In one house of correction, punishment takes place the day previous to a prisoner's discharge, a practice which I have strongly recommended to be discontinued, more particularly as the whipping ordinarily inflicted there is severe, and must therefore greatly add to the already too numerous obstacles in the way of discharged prisoners obtaining employment. In some prisons the scourge in use is similar to that in the army; in others, to the navy; in another, it is a simple school-rod. I have occasionally found these instruments improper from their weight and size, and have considered it my duty to recommend the use of others less severe. The fact of whipping being now almost confined to delinquent boys, many of whom are little above the age and appearance of children, appears to me to call for the exercise of greater circumspection in the infliction, and which, from personal observation, I am satisfied it requires."

This, then, was the manner in which these punishments were inflicted. He had now to state what was the custom at Swaffham, in Norfolk, where a dreadful instrument was used, by which punishment was inflicted, and no medical man in attendance, and where the warrant signed by the magistrate ran thus:—"To be whipped till his back be bloody." It was also stated, that no improvement was found from this system of punishment, as the same persons were very frequently recommitted. There was next, the case of what had occurred in Salford gaol, where an individual was taken out of his bed to undergo the punishment of whipping, the very night before he was liberated from prison. The case was thus mentioned:—

"I instance the case of E. D., who on June 2nd was taken out of bed, after locking up, and the sentence of whipping carried into effect previous to his discharge the next morning."

This system of deferring the execution of corporal punishment to the very day previous to which the criminal was to be released, was extremely bad. It was unjustifiable. In the case he had alluded to, as occurring at Salford, the prisoner described as E. D. had been pulled out of bed and flogged on the night previous to his liberation. How was it possible that, under such circumstances, a man could leave prison with any other feelings than those of anger and revenge? If they took the opinions of persons interested in the question, and who had made efforts to remedy the abuses complained of, they would find the feelings of horror with which such persons contemplated the subject. He would call attention to a communication from the chaplain of the Devizes house of correction. This gentleman makes his report to the Court of Quarter Sessions. The hon. Gentleman read extracts from the document referred to, expressing the opinion of the writer as to the injurious effect, morally and intellectually, produced by the system of flogging. There was another instance to which he would call the attention of the House, in which the punishment of flogging had been carried to a very great length. It occurred in Lancashire, and was inflicted in consequence of insubordination to prison rules. It appeared that the prisoner had objected to the food with which he and his fellow prisoners were supplied as not being of the quantity or quality which they were entitled to receive, and applied to the gaoler to go for the visiting magistrate, with the view of laying the subject before him. The gaoler refused to comply with his request; the prisoner then rejoined that he would not be locked up unless the quality of his food improved, and a scene of some confusion took place. The following day the magistrates arrived—the gaoler reported the case, and the prisoner, who was described as J. B., was sentenced to receive twelve dozen of lashes on his bare back. Then followed the account of the punishment. The prisoner was punished in the inspecting room, in the presence of the inmates of the various wards, who called loudly to the prisoner not to submit to the infliction. Some broke out into loud exclamations, and others burst into tears. The report from which he extracted these particulars concluded by expressing a hope that the example would produce a beneficial effect on the other prisoners. He did not know what effect had been produced on them by what they had witnessed, but he trusted that the effect which would be produced on the House by what it had heard would be to induce it seriously to consider if scenes like these ought to be enacted in prisons, which had for their object the suppression of crime and the reformation of the criminal. A return had been made to the House, on the motion of the hon. member for Devonport, of the number of persons upwards of twenty years of age committed to prison and flogged, by order of a single magistrate, from January, 1840, to January, 1841. He was happy to say that in that return he found only seven persons who had been committed to prison and so flogged. Four of these punishments had been ordered by the rev. John Boudier for neglect of agricultural service. Undoubtedly a magistrate should have the power of punishing persons neglecting service, by absenting themselves or otherwise, but it was another thing a magistrate ordering a man to be flogged for the offence in question, and it astonished him still more when he considered that that magistrate was a minister of the Gospel. He should like to have that magistrate brought before his proposed committee to justify his sentence—to explain on what principle he had pronounced it. Perhaps he could give reasons for his conduct that might convince him and convince the House of its propriety, but until such reasons should be adduced, he would say that that most brutalizing and degrading punishment ought to be abolished. One object of the committee for which he had moved would be, in the event of its appointment, to consider and inquire into (and Government ought to be glad of an opportunity of availing themselves of such services)—that new system of punishment called solitary imprisonment. That species of punishment was as strongly recommended by two of the prison inspectors, Messrs. Crawford and Russell, as it was condemned by Mr. Williams. When he first turned his attention to the subject, he looked over the reports, and heard the arguments in favour of solitary confinement, and was inclined to believe that it might be found a useful species of punishment; but when he came to consider the statements of practical men on the subject, he had come to the conclusion that it was not a punishment necessary in this country, or one which would ever meet with public approbation. Government was now engaged in erecting a model prison. It was to be built with a view to the carrying out of the system of solitary confinement. They were about to make still further experiments on that system, which had already been tried in the Penitentiary at Millbank, and they ought to bear in mind that, from the occurrences which last year took place there, the regulations of the establishment were obliged to be relaxed. During the last year eight persons were removed from Millbank to Bedlam in a state of insanity. If they looked to the report of what had happened in the Eastern Penitentiary at Philadelphia, on the plan of which the New Model Prison was to be constructed, they would find that in that establishment the instances of insanity produced by the solitary system in force there were numerous. In 1836 a report was published by a committee appointed by the Legislature of Lower Canada, which visited the prisons of Auburn, Sing Sing, and Philadelphia; and this committee had come to the resolution of not recommending the system of solitary confinement. The hon. Gentleman then read extracts from this report, strongly condemnatory of the solitary system. He would quote, in favour of this view of the case, the opinions of Captain Basil Hall, who had also visited these prisons. The extracts read from Captain Hall also disapproved of the punishment of solitary confinement in strong terms and from various causes. He was the more wishful to quote these pieces of evidence as to the working of the silent system, because the New Model Prison would soon be opened; and, although he was aware that the right hon. Baronet (Sir James Graham) would be obliged first to bring in a bill for the transfer of prisoners to the model gaol, still he thought that Government would do well to institute some inquiry into the merits of the system, by which they would be better able to judge of its expediency and probable success. He had trespassed longer on the attention of the House than he could have wished to have done, but he had such masses of evidence before him—he had such complaints made to him on the subject—that he hardly knew where to begin or end. He still feared that he had not said enough to induce the House favourably to consider his motion. He trusted that in this fear he might prove mistaken; but, at all events, he was sure of this, whether his committee should be appointed or not, he was sure that the House would find pleasure in engaging in measures so noble, generous, and humane in themselves, and which would prove so satisfactory to the country. The hon. Gentleman concluded by moving the resolution which he announced at the commencement of his speech.

Sir *J. Graham* could assure the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, that he gave him the greatest credit for the humane motives which had induced him to make the motion he had brought under the consideration of the House, and also for the very able and temperate manner in which he had discussed it. He most cordially joined in the sentiment uttered by the hon. Gentleman, when he described this as a subject quite devoid of all party feeling, to be considered entirely on its own merits, and with a view calmly and dispassionately to arrive at the results which would be most conducive to the public good. Entertaining the question in this spirit and with this object alone, he must at once state to the House, that it was his conviction, that it would be inexpedient to appoint a committee to inquire into this subject. He was very glad to see in his place the noble Lord (Lord John Russell), the Member for London, who had devoted much attention to this question, and who, in his humble judgment, had rendered most important services to the State by the attention he had so bestowed upon the subject. At an earlier period, there was an act regulating prison discipline, to which it was unnecessary for him now to refer; but, in 1835, the attention of the Legislature was particularly directed to it; and the hon. Gentleman, the Member for Finsbury, had referred to the services of a noble Friend of his in another place, who instituted an inquiry on the subject, and on whose report the act of 1835 was founded. That act appointed prison inspectors; and he must say, that judging from his official experience, which certainly had not been long, but having had confidential intercourse with the five gentlemen selected for that important duty, it was impossible for a more judicious selection to be made. He had then to put it to the House what, under the operation of the act of 1835, was their course of proceeding? Constantly throughout the year, at least four times every year, every gaol and house of correction was visited by a responsible officer; reports were made by those officers from time to time of a confidential nature to the Secretary of State; and, in addition to these, there was every year a full report prepared by each inspector with reference to each gaol and house of correction in his district, giving most detailed information of everything discovered by him contrary to the Act of Parliament, or, if not contrary to the act, worthy of notice and regulation. These annual reports were made to the Secretary of State, and by the enactments of the Legislature they were in all their details laid on the Table of both Houses of Parliament. As a necessary effect of this regulation, the utmost possible publicity was given to all these transactions—not only was light thrown in upon them, but public attention was fixed upon them. The consequence of such complete publicity was a check on all the proceedings within our gaols, which was almost unknown in any other country, and formed the most salutary preventive against all the abuses which existed before 1835. It might be said, that in consequence of the absence of a direct enactment of details, there was a want of uniformity in the proceedings of the gaols. Now, it should be remembered, that the noble Lord opposite, the Member for the City of London, when Secretary of State, with infinite care, assiduity, and labour, framed one general code of regulations, which, after consulting the prison inspectors, he thought on the whole most conducive to the good regulation of the gaols throughout the kingdom. Instead of harsh unbending enactments, he did think, the course adopted by the noble Lord most in conformity with the intentions of the Legislature, and at the same time most practicable and expedient. The noble Lord recommended these regulations, but he had not then power of enforcing the code universally and at once. The regulations he had recommended were very generally, but somewhat gradually, and therefore very safely, being adopted by the different counties; even where they had not been in whole adopted, still they were, in a great measure, carried into effect with the most salutary results. The magistrates at Quarter Sessions had the power of adopting those regulations at various periods; and, although the Secretary of State had not the power of enforcing, but only recommending his code, he had, at the same time, a veto upon the proceedings of the magistrates. The joint operation of those two powers was gradually introducing uniformity in the system. It might be satisfactory to the House that he should state the counties in England and Wales where the code of regulations entire, as recommended by the noble Lord, had been adopted. They were these—Berks, Bedford, Cornwall, Carnarvon, Cardigan, Chester, Devon, Dorset, Glocester, Hants, Hereford, Kent, Lancaster, Leicester, Lincoln, Middlesex, Northampton, Norfolk, Oxford, Pembroke, Somerset, Surrey, Sussex, Salop, Suffolk, Wilts, and Yorkshire. In all these counties, the whole regulations, uniform in every particular, as recommended by the Secretary of State, had been adopted without variation. Here, then, was a great approximation to uniformity of discipline; and, as he had already stated, even where the whole had not been adopted yet in a great measure, and in all most important particulars, the regulations were now in full force. The hon. Gentleman, in bringing forward his motion, had dwelt considerably on the great apparent increase of crime during the last ten years. In this part of his speech, he had been at some loss exactly to follow the hon. Member. The statements he made were certainly very different from those he was about to make, founded upon an admirable statistical register kept in the Home-office. He would compare the committals for trial before 1835, when the improved system of discipline commenced, to which he had already referred, and which was followed up by subsequent acts of the noble Lord opposite, with the committals for trial at a later period. The number of persons committed for trial in 1830 was 18,657, or one in 744 of the population; in 1840, it was 27,187, or one in 580 of the population, showing an increase of 45 per cent. He believed, that the hon. Gentleman, by including the summary convictions at the latter period, had made the increase nearly 600 per cent; but he conceived, that the committals for trial, as they included all the graver offences, constituted the only true basis for testing the comparative increase of crime; and according to this test it appeared, that comparing the year 1830 with 1840, the increase was only 45 per cent. In 1835, the number of persons committed for trial was 20,731; so that, while the number in 1840 was 45 per cent more than in 1830, it was only 30 per cent more than the number in 1835. This result was most satisfactory, and attributable, in his opinion, to the regularly progressive improvement of prison discipline. Still, it appeared on the face of these documents, that there was an increase of crime. He admitted and regretted it. Still, certain facts, bearing upon this increase, must not be overlooked. In the first place, an increase of population, to the amount of 14 per cent had taken place in the last ten years. In the next place, in consequence of the number and increased efficiency of the police establishment, a very large number of crimes, which heretofore were committed with impunity, no longer escaped detection; and immediate committal for trial followed on the discovery of the offenders. The result, too, of the salutary and prudent mitigation of the criminal code was not only a willingness on the part of parties to prosecute, but what was of more importance in this free country, a promptness on the part of juries to do their duty; for they no longer hesitated to convict, when there appeared proof of guilt, now that the punishments awarded were adequate to the offence, and not sanguinary. Another point connected with this part of the subject, to which he would refer, was a most material alteration in the law, made by the right hon. Baronet, (Sir R. Peel), which relieved prosecutors from a very great portion of their expenses, providing that half of the costs should be paid out of the public purse. Bearing all these circumstances in mind, the House would see the reason of the apparent increase of crime, which was, indeed, more apparent than real, inasmuch as many offences previously passed unpunished, whereas they were now promptly detected, and met with certain punishment. The hon. Gentleman referred to one of the causes, beyond all doubt, of the increase of crime, which he (Sir J. Graham) was happy to say was in the progress of being arrested—the want of education among the great body of the people. No man deplored that ignorance more than he did. He thought that, with reference to the public safety, to public morals, and the station of this country in the world, the diffusion of education among all classes of the population was an important object, and well worthy of the care and attention of Government. By recent regulations that great object had been placed under the control of the responsible advisers of the Crown. For the last three or four years sums of money had been voted for this important purpose; the Executive Government was responsible for the disbursement of that money; and in any measure which it might be his duty to bring forward with respect to the condition of the population, he should consider it his paramount duty not to overlook this great subject of education. It was impossible for him to follow the hon. Gentleman through all the particular cases he had cited. He thought it much more advisable rather to point out the general course of legislation and the conduct of the Executive Government as bearing on the important subject to which the hon. Gentleman had called the attention of the House, than attempt to give direct answers to each particular case he had referred to. He did not mean to deny, that in many cases those abuses which the hon. Gentleman had observed upon might exist, but he was quite certain that they were in a rapid progress of diminution, that effective checks were applied to them, and he was confident that if the Legislature would but steadily adhere to the course pursued within the last six or seven years, if prudent and progressive legislation continued, coupled with constant checks on the part of the Executive Government over the administration of the law, coupled with constant inspection, and, above all, with publicity, into all the various transactions of the various gaols, and coupled with debates like the present, this most desirable result would ultimately be arrived at—uniformity of system, and a really protective and well-regulated plan of prison discipline. The hon. Gentleman had referred to the Ipswich case; and here he would observe in passing, that almost all the cases adverted to by the hon. Gentleman were contained in the fourth report of the inspectors of prisons, and were two years old; and the greater portion of the evils complained of had been corrected by the activity of the inspectors, aided by the constant vigilance of the Government. For this he took no credit to himself, because he had been so short a time in office. He was speaking of his predecessors, by whom every attention had been given to the investigation of practices pursued in prisons; and he felt that he had nothing to do but to adhere to the line they had taken up. The noble Lord opposite framed the regulations for prisons, and what had been his conduct after coming into office? September was the period when the annual report of the inspectors was made known to Parliament, and the hon. Member for Lambeth, who took a great interest in this matter, called upon him in reference to it. He thought this was anything but a party question, and he felt obliged to the hon. Member for his visit. The hon. Member explained the view he took of the advantages to be derived from the reports of the prison inspectors, and threw out a valuable suggestion, on which he had since acted. The reports of the prison inspectors were very voluminous, entering into the most minute details, and he issued a circular calling on the inspectors to subdivide the sixth report, which was the most voluminous of all, into three portions:—the first to consist of the matters contained in the report, to which they thought the attention of the Secretary of State should be specially directed; the second, of any matters with respect to which the Secretary of State ought, in their opinion, to communicate with the visiting magistrates; and the third, of such matters as required further legislation. With great ability and promptitude the inspectors acted on his circular; and in the course of November he was enabled to deal in detail with each gaol on each head. In consequence of that report so subdivided, letters were sent to gaolers and visiting magistrates of those prisons with respect to which any ground of complaint was found to exist in the sixth report. In the course of a month or six weeks letters were received from the visiting magistrates, expressing their willingness to correct any irregularities that had occurred, and he believed there was hardly an instance of a refusal to adopt the suggestions which had been made them. With respect to parts of the prison discipline, they pointed out their inability to carry at once into effect all that might be desired, because a very important portion of the improved system depended on the adaptation of the gaols for the purpose. The hon. Gentleman opposite appeared to confound the separate and the solitary system of imprisonment. The solitary system was open to many abuses, and required the most constant care. He agreed that the solitary system, coupled with low diet, operated most dangerously according to the different nervous temperaments of men. The same square rule could not be applied to all cases, but the particular circumstances of each must be inquired into. This was the way the Legislature had considered the subject, providing that no case of solitary confinement should continue longer than one month at a time, or three months in the space of one year. The hon. Gentleman had referred to a case of solitary imprisonment at Ipswich, where the prisoner was neither visited by chaplain nor surgeon. He could only say that that was a direct violation of the law; for the law provided that once every day the prisoner should be visited by the governor, chaplain, or surgeon. He was about to point out the difference between the separate and the solitary systems, and for this purpose he need only to refer to the admirable circular of the noble Lord opposite, which he held in his hand. The noble Lord said that—

> "Great care must be taken, when this (the separate) system is put into operation, not to confound separate with solitary confinement. It is generally understood," (continued the noble Lord,) "that solitary confinement implies confinement in a gloomy and a narrow cell, without occupation, and with a diet of bread and water only. Separate confinement, as recommended by the inspectors of the home district, means, on the other hand, confinement in large, airy, light, well-warmed and ventilated cells, with moral and religious instruction, regular employment, and the daily visits of the chaplain and officers of the prison, as well as of those engaged in the instruction of the prisoners. . . . By the regulations of the separate system, such persons would be strictly separated from all other criminals, would have the means of repenting of their offences, and, when discharged, would not be liable to be claimed and recognised by convicts, who had been inmates in the same prison."

This was the system, not the solitary system, which was gradually being brought into operation throughout the country; and there was every willingness on the part of counties and borough towns in England and Wales to make every preparation for it; though they naturally observed, that they wished to see the experiment tried in the first instance, and promised, if it proved successful, to carry it into effect. Notwithstanding these scruples, he would state to the House the number of gaols newly built, or in progress of improvement, for this system. But here he must observe, while he thought of it, that he was only doing imperfect justice to the noble Lord opposite, when he said that the noble Lord appointed the inspectors of prisons. The noble Lord also employed, as a public servant, an officer of engineers of the highest merit and skill, who was engaged to give his assistance gratuitously to counties and towns for the improvement of gaols—he alluded to Major Jebb, of the Engineers. He was engaged to give to the local authorities all the results of his experience, and the consequence of this facility in obtaining plans for improved prisons had been a readiness on the part of borough towns and counties, even before a model prison was brought into operation, to improve their gaols. In Hertfordshire an admirable new gaol was built. In Bath a new gaol was to open in a few months. In Hereford a new gaol was completed, and in Peterborough, Scarborough, Buckingham, and Wilton, new gaols were being built, or the old ones being enlarged. In Aylesbury, Battle, Chichester, Reading, Wisbeach, Penzance, Tewkesbury, Plymouth, and Tiverton, the building of new gaols had been recommended by the local authorities; and alterations had been suggested or were in progress at Bedford Gaol and Bedford House of Correction, at Canterbury Gaol and Canterbury Bridewell, at Falmouth Gaol, at Leicester House of Correction, and at Wakefield gaol. At Hitchin, Horsham, and at Newbury, the gaols were to be given up, and contracts had been entered into with several counties for the maintenance of all prisoners after conviction. In the county of Stafford the gaol was about to be increased, as likewise in Berkshire, in Usk, Brecon, Durham, and Hull. Some observations had been made on the varying nature of the punishment of hard labour. He admitted that from the different construction of treadmills this difference might exist; but this was a matter which would come under the consideration of the prison inspectors, and there was no doubt that all would at last be reduced to a state of uniformity. With respect to the diet, the Government had not abstained from interference; and indeed the hon. Gentleman had instanced the case of a mother nursing an infant at her breast while in prison, and receiving at the same time an insufficiency of food. But the hon. Gentleman, at the same time, admitted that this case had been brought under the consideration of the Secretary of State, and that officer actually interfered, much to his credit, in a matter of such minuteness. He took no credit to himself for the course he had pursued in this matter, but he must say, that in every case of solitary or separate imprisonment, where the inspectors reported that the diet was too low, he did not hesitate to communicate this opinion to the visiting magistrates, and he found every disposition on their part to attend to his suggestions as to the increase of diet. With respect to the important question of solitary imprisonment, it was his intention to tread in the footsteps of his predecessor. He should give it the fullest attention from time to time, and he would read to the House a circular which he had addressed to the visiting magistrates in November last on the subject of solitary confinement. The circular was as follows:—

"Inasmuch as it is desirable that uniformity of practice should prevail throughout all prisons in England and Wales, in the carrying into effect the sentence by court of solitary confinement, Secretary Sir James Graham has directed me to call your attention to the 49th section of the act 4th George 4th., c. 64, by which it is provided that every prison should contain a competent number of cells adapted to solitary confinement, and to state his opinion that all prisoners sentenced to solitary confinement by any court should be placed in a light and well ventilated cell, provided with a seat, and the means of communication with the officers of the prison, in case of illness, afforded to them; that artificial heat should be applied when requisite; that the prisoners should attend divine service on the Sabbath, and be visited daily by the governor or keeper, chaplain, and surgeon, who shall insert their having done so in their respective journals, or the reason for any omission, together with a report from the surgeon, to be shown to the visiting magistrate without delay, if he observe any injurious effect on the mind or health of the prisoner, in his opinion to be ascribed to the duration of solitary confinement; that they should be provided with books, and those not able to read be visited by the schoolmaster, or some other person capable of affording to them elementary instruction; that they should be permitted to take such exercise in the open air as may be deemed necessary by the surgeon for the preservation of their health; and that they should be supplied with work at the discretion of the visiting justices. And that the bedding should be withdrawn from the cell during the day and exposed to the air in dry weather."

The hon. Gentleman opposite had referred to the American system of corporal punishments, and drawn some comparison in reference to this country. He would admit that the power of the gaoler, like all other absolute power was open to abuse; but, at the same time, when he considered the large number of criminals who were under the authority of one man, he thought that they must invest that man with great, and he would say, almost absolute power. As to the delegation of that power to the turnkeys, the noble Lord had not admitted that in his general regulations there was no power given by law to the turnkeys to punish a prisoner. On the contrary, by the rule 138 in the official code, their power was limited to placing in close confinement any prisoner who was riotous or disobeyed their authority, applying without delay to the governor for directions. If the turnkey were to exercise any authority at all, it could not be placed under more restriction than was limited by that regulation. Now he wished to show to the House and the country that the Executive Government were not inattentive to these matters, and were proceeding in a merciful way; they were maintaining the due rigour of the law, but at the same time were merciful. It appeared that, in the Wakefield House of Correction, the silent system had been adopted. To that system he was very much disposed to agree with the noble Lord, that there were very grave objections. He believed it to be most irritating to those who were subjected to it, and that it could only be introduced as an extra punishment on account of heinous offences; still it had been brought to his knowledge by one of the inspectors of prisons, that in the House of Correction at Wakefield that system had been applied not only to the convicted prisoners, but also to those who had been committed for trial. He had thought that every person was considered innocent until he was proved to be guilty, but it was not so in this instance. The punishment of silence was very severe, and quite inapplicable to prisoners who were only committed. He suggested that to the magistrates of Wakefield, and the system had been abandoned until the prisoners were convicted. Then, with regard to Salford, the hon. Gentleman detailed a number of cases in which prisoners had not been allowed to have religious instruction according to their particular persuasion. Now those cases had not been stated to him before, nor had he seen them mentioned in any reports of the prison inspectors. He considered that denial of the admission of ministers of their own religion, to offer to the prisoners spiritual consolation at a proper time, consistent with the gaol regulations, to be contrary to the law, cruel in every respect, and not to be tolerated. If it had been done, it was in direct violation of the act of Parliament, for thereby it was enacted, that if there were any prisoner of a religious persuasion different from that of the Established Church, a minister of such persuasion, at the special request of such prisoner, should be allowed to visit him or her at proper and reasonable times, under such restrictions as the visiting justices might think proper. To deny such spiritual consolation then, as far as the law would allow, was certainly harsh and wrong. The next point taken by the hon. Gentleman was the infliction of corporal punishment. To that point he wished to call the attention of the House; because, although a power was given by the existing law to the visiting magistrates to order such punishment in cases specified in the act, yet he wished the House to observe how sparingly that punishment had been inflicted. In 1840 the total number of male adult criminal prisoners in England and Wales was 69,428. The hon. Gentleman talked of 1,200 instances of corporeal punishment, but he would ask him whether they were confined to male adults? There was a great distinction to be drawn with respect to juvenile offenders, as contrasted with male adults; for in many instances such punishment towards juvenile offenders was both mild and proper. He should certainly say, that a frequent infliction of that punishment was a very indifferent proof of the good management of a gaol, but there was such a power given by law to the visiting magistrates; and yet what would the House say when he told them that in 1840 the number of male adult criminal prisoners being nearly 70,000, the whole number of corporeal punishments was but 70? It was not necessary for the House to inquire into cases of that kind; they could have all the facts that must guide them in their decision; they would be quite as intelligible as if inquired into by a committee up stairs; and, indeed, must at last be decided in that House. But the hon. Gentleman would ask him, after all he had stated, why he resisted an inquiry? He would frankly tell the hon. Gentleman his reason. He thought that the House would come to the conclusion that he had drawn, that progressively, steadily, and surely, we were arriving at an improved state of prison discipline in this country. The Executive Government were responsible to that House, and of that responsibility he was at that moment giving a proof in his own person. They were called upon to answer, from time to time, as to the exercise of the large powers vested in them; confidence was reposed in them, and they were proceeding well and surely to an improved state of prison discipline. There was perfect publicity; nothing was concealed, and he believed that the appointment of a select committee to revise the law would only lead to the detail of particular cases, which would shake public confidence and disturb that system which the Government were anxious to maintain for the present undisturbed, and steadily to adhere to. A change of persons in the Home-office had produced no change whatever in the system relating to these matters. All had gone on steadily in the same course, and he entreated the House not to disturb it. In each individual case, if any hon. Gentleman asked for an inquiry, he was ready to give it. He was sure that that would be better than to appoint a committee, and he therefore trusted that the hon. Gentleman would not think that he was treating him with any disrespect if he resisted his motion.

Mr. *Wakley* said, that the information which the noble Lord the late Secretary for the Home Department, (Lord J. Russell) had just received from the right hon. Baronet opposite, must be gratifying to him—namely, that there had been no change whatever in the department of the law relating to this matter, that everything was going on as before, and that all the recommendations which the noble Lord had given were faithfully adopted, and that it was desirable that no change should be made in the prevailing system. It had been said by grave writers, that the merits of a great man were seldom known or appreciated until he was dead. In this case it seemed that a "political suicide" was a good thing. The noble Lord was there alive to hear his merits discussed. He was officially dead; he was officially "the late Secretary." But the late Secretary was there to hear commendations bestowed upon him, from a quarter where he had no reason to expect them. He was sure the noble Lord could scarcely have expected such commendations from such a biographer, as the right hon. Baronet. He had heard the right hon. Gentleman opposite make speeches in a very different tone, when the late Government existed. That, night, however, the right hon. Baronet had been most free and liberal in the commendations he had bestowed upon the late Home Department of the Government. He had listened with great attention in order to ascertain what there was in the system of our prison discipline which the right hon. Baronet could condemn; but it appeared, that after most laborious study and a careful investigation, there was nothing to condemn—nothing to alter. But he trusted the right hon. Baronet would yet see, that he had not given a satisfactory answer to the speech of his hon. Colleague. He thought his hon. Friend had made out a complete case for a committee to report upon, but not to inquire into. Did the right hon. Baronet deny the truth of the allegations which had been made by his hon. Colleague? No such thing. But what did he say? Why, that there was a sure, a progressive, and a satisfactory improvement going on—"therefore do not disturb us." Trust, said he, to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, and to the discretion of the visiting magistrates. He was quite willing to trust to the discretion of the Secretary of State, because he believed he would be a vigorous Secretary and would fulfil the duties of his office faithfully, and in a business-like manner. But on the other hand, he must say, after what he had seen in respect to the conduct of the magistrates, in the superintendence of gaols, it would be cruel and inhuman to leave the prisoners under their management. If the House knew what ought to be done, by past experience, they should not give the right to punish prisoners at the will and discretion of those who now wielded certain powers. That was the common-sense-view of this question. If they found that discipline could not be exercised, with reference to these prisoners, without punishment, why, then, they should leave them to be dealt with by those persons who should administer punishment according to law, and not leave them to the discretion of the magistracy. Look at the case which had occurred at Warwick goal, where a poor boy, who had been confined in a cell for three days and nights, had one of his feet frost bitten, and he was thus crippled for life. He had been committed for trial, but had not been convicted; and yet this punishment was inflicted upon him. Why not put down such practices? Was it nothing to endeavour to establish another system? Why not put down such practices, which were disgraceful, not only to this country, but to the character of this kingdom in respect to its humanity. Look again to Salford and Ipswich; see one case in which there were seven unfortunate boys who were sent to the gaol from the workhouse who had not received a visit from the governor of the gaol, from the chaplain or the surgeon, for weeks and weeks together, the chaplain stating, too, that he did not know he was to visit them, but that he had heard it stated by the governor, that he was not to communicate to these boys spiritual instruction. If hon. Gentlemen were to sit down quietly under such statements as these, and permit such practices to be pursued, it was not possible that that House should command the respect or esteem, whilst they appeared so indifferent to the sufferings of these unfortunate persons. Why, nine-tenths of their crimes were imputable to ignorance and poverty. If that House had done its duty, there would not have been the same number of prisoners in our gaols, and this evil was the consequence of the neglect of the Legislature; and when these unfortunate persons became criminals, they ought to be the objects of the compassion of that House instead of reckless indifference. Much had been said, in regard to the improvements which had been made in the law. He felt this benefit existed in theory, not in practice. It was true there had been a diminution of the evil in respect to capital punishments; that was a great improvement on the old law, but with reference to the punishment of minor offences, we were mere savages. As far as his own experience went, he might state, that the first inquest he held in his capacity as coroner, was in the Coldbath-fields prison. He held an inquest on the body of a black man, a native of a tropical climate, who had been found in the streets in a state of destitution. He was taken up by a police-constable,—he was ultimately sentenced to three months' imprisonment with hard labour. And why? Because he was destitute. This man was placed upon the treadmill on the 2nd of January, but in less than three months he was dead. Now, having heard the evidence, he had no hesitation, as a medical man, in saying, that the sentence which was passed upon this unhappy being, was virtually and practically a sentence of death; there could not exist in the mind of an experienced medical man a doubt on the subject. This unfortunate man, a native of a tropical climate, was placed on the treadmill. Where was that treadmill placed? Was it in a warm room? No such thing; it was exposed to the open air in the severest weather, and after the man was exhausted on the mill, he had to sit on a bench exposed to the wintry blast. His glands were affected, and his lungs were diseased. In short, he died under circumstances similar to those under which animals die in this country when imported from tropical climates. One would have supposed that the visiting magistrates would have said, "You shall not be exposed to this: we do not think your crime is adequate, or in proportion to your punishment." He would not ask how it was that the medical practitioner did not inquire into the case. Another case had occurred which had come under his notice in the same gaol. A man was convicted of stealing four and a-half pounds of bacon in an open shop and in the open day. He was sentenced to six months' imprisonment with hard labour, and this was not all; for six weeks of that time were to be passed in solitary confinement. Now look to the inequality of the punishments inflicted! They must not come to the conclusion that the criminal law in its present state was satisfactory, because the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth had made some valuable alterations in our code. At the Old Bailey sessions before Christmas, a man was transported for life for stealing a penny from a letter, whilst another man for stealing 2*s.* 6*d.* from a letter, was sentenced to seven years' transportation. A man had been convicted for manslaughter at Chelsea. The man pulled a woman, with whom he cohabited, out of bed; he kicked her violently; he placed his knees on her stomach, and swore that if she was pregnant by him, he would kick the child out of her. He was found guilty at the bar of manslaughter, and at the same sessions, whilst one man was transported for life for stealing a penny from a letter, this man was sentenced only to twelve months' imprisonment, with hard labour, in the House of Correction. Such a system as this could not be defended. It could not obtain the respect, or the confidence, or the attention of the public. He hoped the House would set about the work of reform in this matter. The right hon. Baronet had addressed the House in a tone which all persons must admire who felt the force and magnitude of the subject. He hoped the Government would not allow the matter to rest after that night's discussion. The right hon. Baronet had a majority which he could command, and he could prevent the inquiry being made; but he should be delighted if the right hon. Baronet would consent to that part of the motion having reference to the committee to report to the House as to the changes which were necessary for the amendment of the law. He did not believe that a select committee would work well with reference to investigation;

but it appeared to him that the facts in their possession were enough to enable them to legislate on the subject, and that if that House were disposed to make those alterations which the case demanded, they would require no other materials to work upon. They should relieve prisoners from the discretion and cruel conduct of those who were now their governors.

Sir *C. Douglas* was not going to make a long speech upon the subject. Notwithstanding what had been said of the impropriety of appointing clergymen as magistrates, he fully concurred in such appointments, and he believed that if clergymen were not appointed in many districts, no other person would be found to perform the duties of a magistrate. He (Sir C. Douglas) knew that one clergyman who had been alluded to had filled that office for thirty-five years, and that no person had ever filled it better; and when the hon. Gentleman said, he wished he could call such persons to the bar of the House, he not only wished it also, but was sorry it should not be done, because it would afford an opportunity of proving to the House with what zeal, ability, and charity that gentleman had fulfilled his duties. He had received a letter from this gentleman, in which he stated that he had no recollection of the case that had been spoken of, but that it was a general principle with him to have recourse to severity only in extreme and aggravated cases, in which he never hesitated to put the law in force; and that in cases of summary conviction he was of opinion the proper course was always to inflict the full penalty, having found that the mitigation of the penalty greatly increased the repetition of the offence. He only rose to communicate this statement to the House, and would not therefore trespass longer on their attention.

Mr. *Hawes* was anxious to offer a few observations to the House, because he felt himself under the necessity of opposing the motion of his hon. Friend. He quite agreed with all the right hon. Gentleman had said, both as to the manner in which the motion had been brought forward, and as to the motives by which his hon. Friend (Mr. T. Duncombe) had been actuated. He thought, there was nothing so likely to promote good prison discipline as the occasional attention of the House to the subject. At the same time, when he found that his hon. Friend had founded his motion entirely on the reports of the prison inspectors, that his proposition in point of fact was founded upon facts exposed by the inspectors appointed by Government to inquire into the condition of prisons, he could not but think, that these inspectors afforded the House far better information for the improvement of their legislation on the subject than could be obtained by any other means, and consequently that a commission of inquiry was unnecessary, and could lead to no good result. His hon. Friend had gone over a great deal of ground, in which he should not follow him, for he believed that the speech of the right hon. Gentleman opposite had satisfied a great portion of the House, and he was rejoiced to find, that the subject had received so much of his attention. Perhaps, the right hon. Gentleman would permit him to allude to a visit he had paid him at the end of last Session. In the course of last year, the report of the prison inspectors was laid on the Table of the House, and he thought, that it deserved the attention of the Secretary of State; but the right hon. Gentleman having then recently entered upon his office, he thought it right to wait upon the right hon. Gentleman, and to point out to him those parts of it which he deemed to be most deserving of his attention. The right hon. Gentleman gave him every possible attention, and the suggestions that he then made were acted upon, he (Mr. Hawes) hoped he might say with some advantage. He mentioned this, because it was not in anticipation of this motion that he had waited on the right hon. Gentleman. He was extremely glad to find, that the right hon. Gentleman meant to adhere to the general system laid down in prior acts of Parliament, many of which were introduced by the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell), to whom, he repeated, they were greatly indebted for his services, as well as to the right hon. Gentleman (Sir J. Graham). He rejoiced also to hear what had been said with reference to separate and solitary confinement, and he wished to draw the attention of the House to the distinction between these punishments. In America, there existed the most well-founded objections against strict solitary confinement, and disease, loss of mental faculties, and loss of health, having there resulted from it, the system had been given up, and a wiser and more humane system substituted for it. He had read the last report of the inspectors, and he assured the House that, having often expressed an opinion on the subject, he did not find, that the health of the prisoners was at all injured by the separate system, nor anything that tended in any way to alter or change his opinion of it. He was, therefore, glad to find, that the right hon. Gentleman was prepared to carry on the experiment on the system commenced in the model prison in this country. He would here remark, that the greatly-improved state of prison discipline was, doubtless, to be attributed to greater attention on the part of the magistrates; and he would say, further, that, in the greater number of our gaols, no great abuse could exist without remedy, if brought before the notice of the magistrates. If it did, what would be the consequence? The inspectors of prisons, who visited them for the express purpose of examining into abuses, would bring it before the notice of the Secretary of State. If the Secretary of State did not rectify it, some Member of Parliament would bring it before the House, and the eyes of every individual in the country would be directed to it. That was never the case before the appointment of inspectors. But his hon. Friends, the Members for Finsbury seemed to regret the want of uniformity of system. He remembered the previous debates on the subject, though he did not remember what part his hon. Friends had taken; but it being proposed to give the Secretary of State some stringent power to frame rules for the regulation of prisons, the House was strongly opposed to granting such power, although without they could not expect uniformity of system. It was hard, therefore, to turn round, and, for want of a power, they had refused, condemn a system which, after all, was the best that had ever existed in this or in any other country. His hon. Friends had complained also of want of uniformity of punishment. No doubt, there was a want of uniformity of punishment, but the remedy was obvious, though he did not say, that it was easy to be carried into practice. The right hon. Gentleman said truly, that any sudden alteration of prison discipline would involve the country in considerable expense, while they were now, more or less, making considerable and effectual progress in the improvement of the law. With regard to one point, he wished to touch as lightly as possible on an extremely delicate subject. He alluded to the cases of disease in the Penitentiary, mentioned in the 6th Report of the Inspectors of Prisons, which had occasioned considerable uneasiness to Government and the inspectors. He must say, that he wished that penitentiaries were under the direction of the Government, or at least of a committee of the Privy Council. He thought it most desirable, if the Secretary of State had not that perfect control which was necessary, that he should be invested with more, because if the Secretary of State had had sufficient power, and his attention had been called to the subject, some of those lamentable cases would not have occurred. The fact, that these institutions were more or less in the hands of private individuals was some explanation of the causes of the disease that had occurred. However, he felt that the right hon. Gentleman had almost exhausted the subject, yet he felt anxious to show there was good ground for supposing the object of the motion would be better accomplished by the annual reports of the inspectors, which would form the best possible basis for legislation, than by the resolutions of a committee. He did not know what system of discipline his hon. Friend meant to support. Did his hon. Friend wish to go back to the old system? He believed not, yet his hon. Friend objected to the silent system, and did not like the solitary system. The separate system was practised in the gaols at Bristol and Glasgow, and he had received a letter from the governor of the Bristol gaol, stating, that the separate system was enforced there with considerable rigour, persons being confined for periods of two or three years, yet that the prisoners were in perfect health, and that he knew of no disease resulting from their confinement, nor of any diminution in the strength of mind or body; but he further stated, that the system was attended with the greatest alteration in the manners of the prisoners, by cutting them off from communication with each other, and that it had at least this certain recommendation that if it did not make them better, it could not possibly make them worse. He would say no more, than that he believed the right hon. Gentleman's speech would give great satisfaction to the country, as it evinced that the right hon. Gentleman was determined to carry the system impartially into effect.

Viscount *Mahon* entirely concurred in

the concluding observation of the hon. Member respecting the speech of his right hon. Friend (Sir J. Graham). He thought with the hon. Gentleman, that sufficient grounds had been shown for refusing the motion. He thought also with the hon. Member that the reports of the prison inspectors evinced that we were making progressive and gradual improvements in prison discipline; but at the same time he wished to state his opinion that whatever improvement might be intended, whatever advantageous change might take place, it would be but an alleviation of a bad system if applied to terms of years. He did not deny that for shorter periods, the system as it had already received very great amelioration, might yet admit of more, and might become perfectly effectual and satisfactory. But having paid great attention to all the reports of the prison inspectors, he was led to the conclusion that to whatever quarter they turned, whatever system they preferred, they would still find it lamentably deficient for terms of years; and that as applied to long protracted imprisonment, they could adopt no system such as the country at large would approve. First, he would take into consideration the system in which communication was allowed. According to the gaol returns presented in 1841, the greatest evils resulted from the communications often unavoidable between the prisoners. Thus, for example the chaplain of Bedford county gaol reported that three prisoners were brought in together in March last year,

> "So ignorant that they could not tell me even the Saviour's name!"

It was no less the chaplain's desire than his duty to supply these wretched beings with means of religious instruction, but the effects of corrupt association in the prison presented most formidable obstacles; only the month before,

> "The gaoler discovered that two prisoners were actually swearing, and otherwise grossly misbehaving on purpose to hinder and annoy another prisoner who was reading."

In Reading gaol the visiting justices' report most strongly the evils of association and contamination among the prisoners; books of religious instruction had been converted into cards by them to gamble with, and they added,

> "It is impossible for a man to spend ever so short a time in such society without becoming an accomplished rogue."

There is also a long and very interesting report from the chaplain of the House of Correction at Preston.

> "If there is one point more than another, (says he), which I would press upon the attention of the Legislature, it is the condition of a child of fourteen, or even ten years old, turned into a yard or day-room which is tenanted by forty or fifty criminals. Once here the terrors of a prison soon vanish before the levity and merriment of his new companions; he finds that the great objects of admiration and envy are the plunderers who can relate the most attractive histories of daring and successful robbery. Excited by these tales, he soon becomes ambitious of imitating the heroes of them, and is readily instructed by some adept in the craft."

Such were the effects of the one system. There were also great evils resulting from the other, or the separate system, which he knew no way to avert. As a specimen of these evils he would select a case, which had been communicated to him by his noble relative, the Member for the county of Monmouth, (Lord G. Somerset) of whom it was not too much to say, that his administration of justice as chairman of the Quarter-sessions had gained for him from all quarters respect and approbation; the case to which he referred, had occurred in Monmouth gaol. John Taylor had been sentenced to a week's solitary confinement, but after the very first night he was found dead in his cell. A coroner's inquest sat, evidence was entered into, and the surgeon deposed that it was clear suicide had not been committed. Another witness, William Williams, who was cook to the prison, deposed, that the wretched man had overnight urgently requested an extra allowance of gruel which was refused him, and that he had expressed a dread of ghosts appearing to him in his solitary confinement. Such were the cases which had occurred of men paying the penalty of their lives under the infliction of solitary confinement. The fears of persons so confined might be ridiculed; but it was the results, not the reasonableness, of such fears that he asked the House to consider, and to ask themselves how such fears could be prevented or rendered less fatal in the case of uneducated men. Looking further to the report of the inspectors as to the bridewell of Bristol, it appeared that during the last year a woman sentenced to solitary confinement had earnestly begged not to be shut up alone, but her entreaties could not be complied with, and she had then on two separate occasions attempted suicide, and such was the strong compassion entertained upon the case by the magistrates, that they had paid her expenses back to her residence. In the Stafford county gaol, the surgeon states that within the last eight or ten years, there had been about six cases in which death had been induced apparently from the length of solitary confinement. Then, as to Millbank Penitentiary, it was well known that several persons lost their reason, some their lives, in consequence of confinement in solitary cells. Upon what system, then, he asked, were they to rely for a reformation of the evils attendant upon the present practice of confinement for crime? If communication between the prisoners were permitted, contamination and increased depravity was the consequence; if, on the other hand, solitary confinement were resorted to, he must assert, and his right hon. Friends would not contradict him, that the loss of reason and of life often followed. If the lives of criminals were to be sacrificed, let them be condemned to that punishment; let it be done openly and in the face of day; let us retrace our humane advances towards the mitigation of the penal Code, but do not do that in the solitary cell which you shrink from doing on the public scaffold; but do not inflict the penalty of death under the milder name of imprisonment. What, then, was the House to do in this case? For shorter periods, as he could easily conceive, some of the evils he had alluded to might be obviated, but when it came to terms of years, he was persuaded that no endeavours would be successful to make imprisonment an effective substitute for transportation. The strongest part of the case, however, yet remained behind—namely, the condition of prisoners after their discharge—of men who, with blasted characters, were unable to obtain employment. The evidence upon this point was very strong. Let the House weigh well the expressions of the learned Recorder of Exeter, in his address to the grand jury at the sessions ending January, 1841. He adverted to his own painful feelings when required to pass sentence on young offenders for a first offence, and having previously borne an honest character.

"I often see," [he says] "such persons exhibit proofs of deep and bitter repentance—of repentance in such a form as I am convinced is not assumed, but is felt deeply and sincerely; and in such cases I endeavour to point out to them the advantage of good character, but my heart sinks within me when I reflect what such unfortunate persons have to encounter when they seek to carry out their good resolutions by their own exertions, without a home or a place of shelter, forsaken by their friends and sneered at by their old acquaintance, until at length, under the influence of despair and the pressure of want, some greater crime is committed."

Were not such words from such an authority entitled to great attention? He could cite another important evidence on this point in a letter dated May 26, 1841, and published in the daily papers from the Rev. Mr. Nihil, the chaplain and governor of Millbank Penitentiary, who in the most pathetic terms lamented the impossibility of finding employment for prisoners when they were discharged. The rev. gentleman's words, in speaking of this difficulty, were—

"Prisoners sometimes express reluctance to leave the Penitentiary, not knowing whither to go. Young girls have besought me to save them from returning to a brutal father, who had forced them into crime; others are claimed by abandoned mothers, whose sole object is to bring them up in vagrancy and vice; others, after being received with apparent kindness by relatives, have been turned adrift by those very relatives as soon as they had spent the prisoner's little pittance in intoxication."

Could anything be more gloomy than this picture? He believed that many a person who was discharged from prison after undergoing his sentence was sincerely desirous of shunning the path of crime, but was unable to find employment in consequence of his lost character and his previous career. He believed there were many cases in which such persons had felt an earnest desire to return to a course of honest industry, but in the midst of their endeavours while struggling to regain the right road, there arose dismal phantoms to discourage and dismay them—

"——malesuada Fames et turpis Egestas
"Terribiles visu formæ."

Thus they were scared from the paths of virtue they might otherwise pursue, and the good seed which during punishment the chaplain of the gaol might have implanted in their minds was thus prevented from taking permanent root. Nor could it be expected that persons should take into their service those whose character was blighted by former convictions, in preference to such as were perfectly free from suspicion. Now, considering the prodigious competition for employment, it was not to be supposed that those who came out of gaols should be able to procure honest work even when desirous of it. The only way to obviate these evils was resorting to the old English plan of transportation, but freed from its previous abuses; thus allowing the criminals discharged to enter an entirely new state of society, and to find a comparatively easy road to the recovery of their lost good name. This was an object for which our Australian colonies furnished valuable facilities. Of this he was satisfied, that no system of imprisonment could possibly be devised, calculated perfectly to answer as a substitute for transportation; and he hoped that this opinion would gain ground and become universal. He had seen some suggestions for the employment of criminals in another hemisphere which had been drawn up by his noble Friend, the Secretary for the colonies, whilst he was seated on the opposite side of the House, and which, although he did not feel at liberty to say what that plan was, or in what direction it tended, was to him perfectly satisfactory. Having been favoured with a view of these suggestions, he could not but express a hope that they would receive official consideration and be carried into practical effect. He must, in the meantime, assert, that transportation did afford an outlet for the criminal population of Great Britain, which it would be beneficial to all parties concerned to bring into operation, beneficial to the public at home, beneficial to the criminals, and beneficial to the colonies, which would thereby receive an accession of what was now so much wished and wanted, namely, labour. In the present state of the question, however, he was perfectly satisfied with what had fallen from his right hon. Friend on the subject, and if the motion were pressed to a division, he should vote with his right hon. Friend.

Mr. *O'Connell* was rather surprised, after the speech which the noble Lord had delivered, to hear him say that he should vote with the right hon. Baronet, the Secretary for the Home Department, in case the question came to a division. He (Mr. O'Connell) regretted that the motion had been made by the hon. Member for Finsbury, because if he had been aware of the extent to which the arguments had gone, he would have prepared himself to have entered fully upon the subject, whereas he had made an appointment for the following day, in order to obtain some information that he required. Before, however, he went into such parts of the subject before the House as he was prepared to deal with, he must protest against what had fallen from the hon. Member for Finsbury on the subject of the reform which had taken place of late years in the criminal law, changes which he was disposed to regard as one of the evidences of the humane spirit which animated the Legislature of the day; there were not so many persons now hanged at the debtors' door at Newgate, during the whole year, that there used to be formerly at the end of every sessions held at the Old Bailey, and the consequence was that the crimes of violence had since very considerably diminished. In Belgium, where the punishment of death was totally abolished, the effect had been the same; and in order to show the discrepancy which now existed between the punishments inflicted in this country, he need only turn to the newspaper of the day to furnish a sufficient sample; for he found in the same journal a case recorded, where a man had by a blow caused the death of a woman, for which he was sentenced to six months' imprisonment; and in the same column was another case, where a man had stolen a lady's reticule, for which he had been sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment. But what he had principally to call the attention of the House to on the present occasion was, the complaints of the Roman Catholic clergymen with respect to prison regulations. The right hon. Baronet had read the act of Parliament on this subject, and had expressed his readiness to work out the provisions of the law; but he seemed to think this was sufficiently done by a sort of evasion on the part of the magistrates, who professed to keep improper persons out of the gaols. Such, however, was not the right construction of the law. The Roman Catholic clergy could not be called in to perform his religious practices within the walls of a criminal gaol but by the special request of the prisoners, who were so much in the power of the gaolers and magistrates that they dared not make this special request. What was wanted by him was to give power to the Roman Catholic clergy to enter the prisons where there were criminals of their own faith, who were quite as much in want of spiritual instruction as those who made the special request required by the law; indeed, there was no class of persons who required religious instruction so much as those who were indisposed to make a special demand for the offices of the Roman Catholic clergy. He would not dwell upon the point at that moment, for he intended to bring the subject before the House in the form of a distinct motion; he would content himself in the meantime with pointing to some facts which would show that he had not exaggerated the circumstances of which he had complained. In the county of Middlesex there had been formed a society of Roman Catholic ladies for the purpose of visiting the prisons, and this most praiseworthy society having been brought before the notice of the bench of magistrates, had, on three separate occasions, been refused permission to enter the gaols. Had a parallel case happened in Ireland, had a society of Protestant ladies been formed to visit the prisoners there—the majority of them being Roman Catholics—and had they been refused access to their co-religionists, no language would have been strong enough to have been used by some persons of that persuasion. But he would use no such terms. All he wished to do was to show how necessary it was that the Roman Catholic clergy should have free access to the prisons. There was no person who was empowered to officiate in this capacity who was not qualified by education for the office of a priest, and who was not certified to be so by the Roman Catholic bishop of the district. This precaution, therefore, operated as a guard against improper persons gaining admission to the prisoners on the plea of affording them religious instruction, and the case was daily growing more important in the opinion of the educated classes, inasmuch as the Roman Catholic faith was spreading amongst those classes in England, and by consequence was also obtaining in the lower ranks of life. In some prisons the Roman Catholic criminals complained that they were compelled to attend Protestant worship. In Salford gaol this was the case, and he must say that the chaplain had, in this instance, shown much more zeal than discretion in preaching sermons to the prisoners which turned wholly on controversial points. He felt it conscientiously to be his duty not to permit this matter to rest without attempting, in a tone and manner becoming the gravity of the subject, to direct the attention of the Legislature to the subject until these abuses were remedied.

Lord *J. Russell* said, that in the course of the present discussion many observations had been made, having no immediate reference to the motion of his hon. Friend the Member for Finsbury. With respect to that portion of the evils in our criminal system of jurisprudence which might be traced to the state of the law itself, he begged to say that he thought it was a topic with which they had then nothing to do, nor were they on that occasion called upon to examine the observations made upon those topics. There were other observations made upon other transactions, with which also he thought that House had then nothing to do. For his part, however, he was ready to discuss any of them whenever a proper occasion offered, but he must say that he thought it highly inexpedient to mix up such subjects with the question whether it was fitting or not that they should appoint a committee to inquire into and report upon the present system of prison discipline. The sole question before the House was, whether or not they ought to appoint a committee in compliance with the motion of his hon. Friend. He requested the House to recollect that it was not for a moment pretended by any one that we had, in this country, reached the highest point of perfection in our system of prison discipline—it was not pretended that there were no defects or abuses; on the contrary, it was most truly stated that we were going on from year to year making progress—effecting gradual improvements, and he was by no means prepared to say that that progress could be advantageously accelerated by adopting the motion of his hon. Friend the Member for Finsbury. It was well known to all persons who paid any attention to the subject of prison discipline, that if any abuse took place the matter was immediately reported to the Secretary of State, and the report was usually laid upon the Table of that House. It was well known that to those matters every publicity was given. As to particular instances, it was only necessary that inquiry should be made of the Secretary of State respecting them, and, that inquiry being made in the House, it was usual for the Secretary of State to say, whether he had any remedy to propose, or any explanation to give. It must be in the recollection of hon. Members, that Ministers of the Crown were, generally speaking, very ready to supply reasonable information upon subjects of this nature, to correct abuses, and to lay before the House such explanations as magistrates might furnish. If it were really true that such a state of the law existed as proved the present system to be defective, then he should say there would be no difficulty in making out a sufficient case to induce the House to consent to the introduction of a bill to amend such defects, but he confessed that at present he did not anticipate any advantage from a general inquiry. The House, of course, had not overlooked the fact that the Colleague of the hon. Mover had given up half the case when he said that no inquiry into facts was needed. He said he did not want an inquiry, but would be content with the report of a committee on the subject. Now he, for one, was perfectly satisfied—for the present, at least—with seeing that the attention of the House had been called to the subject, and the vigilance of the Secretary of State awakened. There had been a case referred to by an hon. and learned Member near him, respecting which it did not appear that the right hon. Gentleman opposite possessed sufficient information. It would certainly seem that he had not been informed as to the practice in prisons regarding Roman Catholics. As to that point, he certainly did think that the law was defective, and he thought that the defects of the law in that respect might have been remedied if the clause proposed by Mr. Langdale had been agreed to. He regretted that that clause had been lost; at the same time he thought Roman Catholic priests should not be permitted to go into prisons to visit the prisoners subject to no regulations. [Mr. *O'Connell:* To visit the Catholic prisoners.] He must repeat that he did not assent to that proposition, for they could hardly allow a general rule of that kind to prevail, without granting a similar permission to the ministers of all religious denominations. To him it did not appear expedient that any such unlimited permission should be granted—he thought that it would be improper and indiscreet to open the prisons of the United Kingdom to the various controversies to which fanaticism had given rise. But, entertaining those views, he was the furthest in the world from attempting to say that Roman Catholic priests should be denied access to those prisoners who wished to be visited by them. In Middlesex, an arrangement of that kind was peculiarly required, for the number of Roman Catholics who came to London in search of employment was considerable. A large proportion of the prisoners in the gaols of Middlesex were Roman Catholics; he, therefore, thought that the decision of the county magistrates was not justified by the state of the county, and he saw no reason why the requests of the Roman Catholic bodies should not have been complied with, or why there should not be a chaplain for the instruction of Roman Catholic prisoners. As to the motion of his hon. Friend, the Member for Finsbury, it appeared to him that no practical advantage would arise from the adoption of it, for all improvement had much better be made under the direction of the executive Government, and he felt assured that when a case came under the consideration of an hon. Member, and that he brought it forward in the House, the advisers of the Crown would examine into it, and apply the remedy which the circumstances of the case required. Holding these opinions, then, he felt that he could not do otherwise than vote against the motion of his hon. Friend.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* rose for the purpose of offering some explanation with regard to the House of Correction at Cambridge, to which allusion had been made. The alleged imperfections in the management of that establishment were, in some degree, if not wholly, to be imputed to the effects of the suit, which for some years had been pending, with respect to the Spinning-house, between the University and the trustees of the charity. So far from there being any indisposition on the part of the University or of the town to effect the desired improvements, he was enabled to state that the Vice-Chancellor had been in communication on the subject with the solicitor of the trustees, the object of the University being to effect a complete and substantial improvement in the system pursued at the House of Correction. The right hon. Gentleman then referred, as we understood, to the sixth report of the inspectors of prisons, to show that, pending the suit, no scheme could be devised for the purpose of effecting a complete reformation in the system pursued in the Spinning-house, at the same time that arrangements had been made to secure the regular performance of divine service on Sundays, as well as to promote the due classification of the prisoners. He further observed, that there was considerable intricacy in the case, but that the University had done all that they possibly could do for the purpose of accomplishing a reform in that prison. It had been also said that Barnewell was a populous parish, and had of late years quite outgrown the means of religious instruction; that it contained a great many lodging-houses where persons of bad character congregated, some of whom were in the habit of driving about dog-carts, professing to distribute religious tracts, and that those tracts supplied the only religious instruction with which the people were furnished. Now, so far from that being a correct representation of the facts, he was enabled to state that one of the fellows of Trinity college had himself acquired the site of a church in Barnewell, capable of containing upwards of 1,000 individuals, and that he had undertaken to perform all the duties of a parish minister.

Mr. *Brotherton* said, that as the Salford prison had been alluded to, he wished to offer a few words in explanation. The cases alluded to by the hon. Member for Finsbury had occurred some time ago. He was ready to admit that great abuses had existed in that prison, but the practice of flogging, he understood, had been discontinued, and the discipline improved. The governor, and several other officers had been removed. The Roman Catholic clergymen had complained to him (Mr. Brotherton) that they had not that access to prisoners of their persuasion which was necessary, and, it being a fact that the majority of the prisoners were Roman Catholics, it was desirable that the clergy should have the means of communicating with them without being specially sent for. The increase in the number of persons committed for trial might be attributed to various causes—as the want of employment, the vigilance of the police, and the interest the magistrates' clerks had in sending trifling cases to the quarter sessions. The expense of prosecutions was borne by the county, and this fact, he felt satisfied, led many magistrates to commit offenders whose cases ought to have been summarily disposed of.

Mr. *S. Harford* was glad that the attention of the noble Lord the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster had been directed to the subject, for in the county which the noble Lord represented the state of the prisons demanded extensive and effectual improvement. He had been sheriff of that county two years ago, and he then thought it his duty to call the attention of the magistrates of the county to the state in which he found the prisons. In some cases he found four men sleeping in one bed, the prison crowded in every portion, and not appearing to be capable of extension in such a way as to afford the accommodation really required. Moreover, the drainage of the prison was of the worst description, and its condition was in all respects greatly to be censured. He hoped, therefore, that attention would be directed to it without delay.

Lord *G. Somerset* stated, that the attention of the local authorities had been directed to the subject, and that it was proposed to incur an expenditure of from 16,000*l.* to 20,000*l.* for the improvement of the prison. Inquiries were at present going forward for the purpose of ascertaining in what manner that object could best be effected. For the information of his hon. Friend opposite, he begged to state that a new gaoler had been appointed, and that decided improvements might forthwith be expected.

Mr. *T. Duncombe* hoped, that if he consented to allow this motion to be negatived without putting the House to the trouble of a division, it would not, from that circumstance be inferred, that he in any respect approved of the existing system. The complaint he made against the present system was, that there was no uniformity in it; the whole matter was left to the discretion of the visiting magistrates, subject, of course, to the approbation of the Secretary of State for the Home Department. He should like to see the whole system with regard to discipline, diet, and labour, placed on one and the same basis throughout the country, and he believed that a committee would be able to make suggestions upon which an act of Parliament might be framed for regulating all prisons, and making the system uniform. He feared that it would be useless to press his motion to a division; but he felt confident that this discussion would do a great deal of good. He was sorry that he had done any injustice to Cambridge; it was perfectly true that divine service was performed there on the Sabbath-day since the year 1836;

but, notwithstanding that, the Gaol Act was still contravened, because it directed that prayers should be read every day, which was not done. With regard to the case of Barnewell, he believed it remained in much the same state as it was reported to be in by the inspectors, with the only exception that service was performed there on the Sabbath. It was true that a letter had been received stating that certain improvements had been made, but it was not known what they were. His hon. Friend had accused him of not doing justice to the criminal code, on the ground of the great mitigations which were made in punishments; but he was ready to admit, that there were great mitigations. Yet he must warn the House and her Majesty's Government, that by the present system of prison discipline, they were substituting the dungeon for the scaffold, and that great numbers of persons who went into prison in good health, and in possession of their mental faculties, come out crippled, emaciated skeletons, and seriously injured both in body and mind. A nice distinction must be made between the silent and the solitary system. The right hon. Gentleman accused him of confounding the two; the fact was, that the separate system was the solitary system, though hon. Gentlemen might call it the separate system, if they liked. There were two systems; there was the solitary confinement in the dark cell upon bread and water, and solitary confinement in a well-aired and lighted cell. He should not withdraw his motion, but leave the House to deal with it as they thought fit.

Motion negatived.

HILL COOLIES]. Mr. *Vernon Smith* rose to call the attention of the House, pursuant to notice, to the recent Order in Council respecting the emigration of Hill Coolies, and to move for a copy of the instructions given by the India Board to Lord Ellenborough on that subject. The hon. Member, after stating that he considered that the course which the noble Lord the Secretary for the Colonies was pursuing upon this question was calculated to retard the progress of the improvement now taking place in the West India Islands, shortly stated the position in which the subject was with reference to the supply of labour imported into those islands to compete with the emancipated negroes. In 1837 an importation of Hill Coolies from the East Indies into the West India Islands had taken place, others having been previously introduced into the Mauritius in 1835. Owing to some mismanagement which had occurred upon the same subject in British Guiana, Lord Brougham, in the year 1838, had made an able and eloquent speech relative to the introduction of Hill Coolies into that colony, which had the effect of putting a stop to it, and which led to the determination of the people of this country, that nothing short of a prohibition on the part of the Governor-general of India against any further exportation of Hill Coolies would be satisfactory to them. His noble Friend (Lord John Russell) afterwards introduced a bill called the Colonial Passengers' Act, showing his intention to be to take some steps with respect to Hill Coolies in the Mauritius; and at the time, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer said, that it would be better that he should issue an Order in Council upon the subject. But his noble Friend, not deeming that the proper way to raise the discussion, had not adopted that course. The right hon. Baronet opposite (Sir J. Graham) proposed that a bill should be introduced for raising the question; but his (Mr. V. Smith's) noble Friend thought it better to raise it by proposing the introduction of clauses in the Colonial Passenger's Bill, and that course was approved of by the House. A discussion then took place, in which the right hon. and learned Gentleman, the late Member for the Tower Hamlets actively opposed the proposition of the Government, but on a division, the bill was allowed to proceed. In the meantime, however, the whole machinery of the anti-slavery party was brought to bear against the measure; and after the third reading on the question that the bill should pass, it was thrown out, and mainly by the agency of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Dorchester, who came down with one of his "heavy pounding" speeches, and destroyed their chance of passing the bill for that time, declaring that "he would not be called upon to legislate without having any defined plan laid before him by the noble Lord." The right hon. Baronet was assisted on that occasion by an hon. Friend, who was a director of the East India Company, who presented a petition from that body against the measure, and said, that before they passed such a measure they ought to wait the result of information from India. This was the position of the matter at the close of the last Session; and what he contended for was, that by throwing out that bill, they gave Parliamentary sanction to the prohibition against the exportation of Hill Coolies from India to the Mauritius. He must say, then, that he thought it somewhat strange that the present Government should so soon violate the pledges which they had extracted from their predecessors, and it was because he thought the step taken by the noble Lord the present Secretary for the Colonies, unjustified either by the opinions of parties acquainted with the subject, or the weight of evidence, that he felt it incumbent on him to bring the matter under the consideration of the House. At all events, before he adopted the course which he had thought fit to take, the noble Lord should have invited discussion in Parliament; but this he had not done, although the question was one of immense importance, not only to the interests of proprietors in both the West Indies and the Mauritius, but to the happiness of hundreds of thousands of the unfortunate Hill Coolies. What did the report presented to that House contain? That report was drawn up by six gentlemen, appointed by the Governor-general of India, one of whom, however, had returned to this country before it was signed, but his opinions having been published in a pamphlet, were well known before the Colonial Passengers' Bill was thrown out. Three of the remaining five only signed the report, but still it was the report of the majority; and although somewhat long like Indian reports, it was in many respects an able report. The conclusion to be drawn from this report was that, on the whole, emigration of Hill Coolies to the Mauritius was unadvisable, in this opinion Mr. Dowton did not concur; but it could not be expected that he would have been unfavourable to a trade in which he was largely engaged. He now came to the report of Mr. J. P. Grant, and he admitted that it was an able report. Mr. J. P. Grant seemed favourable to the importation of Hill Coolies to the Mauritius; but there were parts of his statements which would seem to lead to an opposite conclusion, because he admitted the existence of abuses and divided them into three heads. 1. There were abuses in India, the police who were the only persons for the execution of the law, being suspected of assisting crimps. 2. There were abuses at sea; there was a considerable want of fresh water, and upon every passage some of those unfortunate persons threw themselves overboard, for the purpose, as Mr. Grant conjectured, of being picked up again. In the third place there were abuses at the Mauritius, and the slave owners were not to be trusted with the management of the Hill Coolies. Yet, in spite of these opinions, this gentleman was highly favourable to their exportation. He was anxious only to prevent a great cause from being endangered by a premature or false step. The next paper he should advert to was the minute of Lord Auckland. There were four other minutes, but he would only refer to the minute of Lord Auckland, because he was sure no one in that House could doubt either the sterling good sense or humanity of his noble Friend, the late Governor-general of India. The question was, did the minute of Lord Auckland justify the course which the noble Lord opposite, the Secretary for the Colonies, had taken, or did it contain any opinion that such a course would be beneficial either to India or the Mauritius. He charged the noble Lord opposite (the Secretary for the Colonies) with precipitation, and, therefore, in justification of the noble Lord, he would read the strongest parts of the minute of Lord Auckland, in order that the House might be able fairly to judge of the matter. What did Lord Auckland say? Why, after alluding to the opinion of Mr. Dewson, who maintained opposite views, he said:—

> "The attention which I have been able to give to the subject, has led me to no very satisfactory general conclusion upon it, embracing, as it does, the difficult question of opening emigration to many distant and even foreign colonies. . . It was upon no understood practice, and only by the busy intervention of an active agency, that the first emigrants were induced to seek their fortunes in the Mauritius; and whether the many who have since done so have done it to their own good or evil, is a proposition which is yet to be solved, on which there have not been time and experience sufficient to determine."

Again,—

> "I greatly fear that, though the amendment and caution would no doubt come with time, no strictness of regulation, no vigilance on the part of the authorities, would immediately prevent the frequent infliction of grievous oppressions and deceits upon large numbers of persons, helpless from their poverty, and from their utter ignorance and inexperience."

Speaking of the police, he said,—

"It is, however, but too true that this branch of our service is most defective and ineffective, and the different experiments which have been tried for its reform have greatly ended in disappointment."

Lord Auckland also said,—

"It will be for her Majesty's Government to decide whether distinctions as to the supply of labour can be admitted between the several Crown settlements. As respects the interests for which we are more especially responsible, I would say that my objections are assuredly the strongest to dealings of this description with the colonies and settlements which are most distant. The sea passage to them is, from its very length, liable to suffering and to hazard. We could not follow the emigrant with our care and protection; and we do not know to what laws or usages he might be consigned. With the Mauritius, however, the case is different; it is a British settlement, easily accessible from India, and open to our observation; and if the question were that of opening emigration to that island alone, I would willingly attempt to meet the difficulties which might be opposed to us, and I should hope shortly and gradually, in a very great measure, to overcome them by a plan such as had been suggested by Mr. Grant."

Lord Auckland further observed,

"We must remember, however, that in permitting emigration to the Mauritius, it would be necessary to guard against the possibility of labourers shipped nominally for that island being carried elsewhere, or their being inveigled while on the island into contracts of service in other settlements where we could have no security for their treatment. The interests of the masters in the colony would be a powerful check against the latter evil, and I should not despair of our being able to provide duly for both of these objects again."

"But after we shall have been satisfied of the safety of emigration to the Mauritius itself, we shall still have to consider that such emigration could scarcely be allowed without its leading also to a renewed emigration of labourers, chiefly British subjects, from Pondicherry, or other European settlements in India, to foreign colonies. The government of Pondicherry has co-operated with us in a manner for which all our gratitude is due, in prohibiting exportation from its territory, while the prohibition was strictly in force on our own coasts; but we cannot expect that we shall be permitted to stock Mauritius with labourers without immediate facilities being again given by the French authorities for emigration to Bourbon. From papers which were before me in 1837, it is my impression that great care is taken by the Bourbon government to insure the proper treatment of imported labourers; but this is a fact not to be assumed upon any imperfect evidence, and the importance of the consideration affecting this part of the subject will be duly estimated by the Government in England in framing final instructions for our guidance. The home authorities alone will be able to determine how far the cordial co-operation of foreign governments is to be relied on in the steady enforcement of measures of effectual precaution and protection within the limits of these settlements. If we cannot depend on that co-operation, I fear that we should not be justified in opening emigration even to the Mauritius."

Now, here were the opinions of Lord Auckland; but was it not clear that the noble Lord opposite had not followed these opinions. In none of the papers on the Table did it appear that the noble Lord opposite had done anything to ensure this "cordial co-operation" on the part of foreign governments; and it could not be doubted that some foreign Governments were not likely to consent to an arrangement which would tend to promote the prosperous cultivation of the colonies of this country. Lord Auckland, in concluding his minute, said:—

"If, therefore, all plans for an extended emigration should be for the present rejected by the home authorities, and if the expediency of some relaxation of the existing law should nevertheless be admitted, I should be disposed to regulate but little, to have for such a restricted purpose no cumbrous machinery of inspectors and protectors, and examiners, but simply to declare that no ship shall take more than ten or twenty such passengers; perhaps not more than one for every twenty-five tons of each vessel. A provision of this kind would be open to none of the objections by which the adoption of a larger measure may be impeded, and it would take off the character of excessive and impolitic, if not of unjust restraint from the enactment as it at present stands."

Now, he contended, that the minute of Lord Auckland was not only exceedingly doubtful, but did not warrant the noble Lord opposite in taking any step in the matter without first obtaining the sanction of Parliament. He would not trouble the House with the minutes of Mr. Bird, Mr. Prinsep, and Mr. Amos, neither would he refer to the ill-treatment of the Coolies by other parties besides crimps and serangs. An examination of some Hill Coolies took place at Calcutta, an account of which was published in the *British Friend of India Magazine.* The result of that examination established, that these poor men had been much disappointed in their expectations. Many stated, that they only saved one rupee a month, and that they had left their wives and families in India to be supported by their friends. Five of the Hill Coolies who were examined stated, that they would not be induced to return to the Mauritius, if they were offered sixteen rupees per month. There were only two who expressed a willingness to return. From this examination he would infer, that very few of these Hill Coolies were desirous of going back to the Mauritius, notwithstanding that they were represented to have been so comfortably situated in that island. At the same time he thought, that under proper regulations the case would be different. What he asserted, however, was, that up to October 1841, there was no evidence which could justify the departure of the present Government from the course adopted by their predecessors, and that instead of stating his intention, as he ought to have done, the noble Lord opposite had allowed his Order in Council to slip out through a corner of the Gazette. He would direct the attention of the House to the line of policy pursued by the noble Lord since his appointment to the office which he now filled. It would be in the recollection of hon. Members that the noble Lord the Secretary for the Colonies, introduced to the notice of Parliament at the commencement of the present Session two bills, one entitled the Passengers' Act, and the second was the Colonial Lands Administration Act, both of which the noble Lord might have found already prepared for him at the Colonial-office by his predecessor in office. It was to the first bill that he would direct his observations. Before that bill was introduced, the Order in Council with reference to the Hill Coolies appeared in the *Gazette*, and he would say, that a more feeble, worthless, inefficient document he had never met with in the course of his parliamentary career. The preamble was ridiculous, foolish, and feeble in the extreme. If such an order had been issued by the late Government, he would have been the first to denounce it as being a rash and reckless act of a Whig Administration. He wished the noble Lord to inform him whether the Order in Council was published with the knowledge and approbation of the East India Company. It was essentially necessary that the noble Lord the Secretary for the Colonies should know whether the East India Company intended to co-operate with him in carrying his scheme into operation before he attempted to do so upon his own responsibility. He thought that if the Hill Coolies could obtain sufficient sustenance and employment in India, perhaps in cultivating sugar with which the India servants were connected, there existed no necessity for them to emigrate. He had no objection to their taking advantage of a free market, provided they were protected against want and fraud. If there was no correspondence between the noble Lord who had recently left this country for the East Indies and the Board of Commissioners, he thought that the East India Company had not been treated with proper respect by the noble Lord. The public had a right to be made acquainted with the opinion of the noble Lord on the subject. He would ask why did not the noble Lord wait for the meeting of Parliament before he issued his Order in Council? Was the noble Lord afraid of exciting the opposition and clamour of the anti-slavery party, which he had, when out of office, directed against the late Whig Government? What was the difference between the present circumstances and those which existed two years ago? If the prosperity of either the Mauritius or the Hill Coolies had been prejudiced, all he could say was, that the noble Lord opposite was responsible for it, in consequence of the obstacles he threw in the way of the measure of 1840. It was quite clear, although the noble Lord had not stated it, that the bill he had introduced related to the Hill Coolies, for it contained a clause, giving—

> "Power to the Governor-general of India in Council to adopt this act, with certain exceptions, in India."

The noble Lord should have stated this fact; but his not having done so shows why he had issued his Orders in Council two days before Parliament had met. This, however, was substituting Crown-made law for law made by Parliament. Now, he wished the noble Lord to answer the question he should put; in the first place he wished to know the nature of the communications received from the East India Company, and the instructions given to the present Governor-general of India. That noble Lord could not have gone out without definite instructions on this subject. It was well known that in 1838 the present Governor-general of India opposed the emigration of Hill Coolies, whom he described as being more like monkeys than men, and yet he was ready to sanction and facilitate their exportation. This was a most inconsistent position in which to place that noble Lord. But what had occurred to justify the change of opinion in the hon. Members opposite? He was anxious to see both the West Indies and the Mauritius properly cultivated, and that the natives of India should be at liberty to dispose of their labour to the best advantage, and it was for these reasons that he now called for the production of the correspondence with the East India Company, and the instructions given to Lord Ellenborough. He should also like to be informed what steps the noble Lord had taken to ensure the "cordial co-operation" of foreign powers. The right hon. Gentleman concluded by moving for a copy of the instructions given by the Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India to Lord Ellenborough on the subject of the recent Order in Council respecting the emigration of Hill Coolies.

Lord *Stanley:* Sir, I beg the indulgence of the House while I endeavour to meet the various attacks which the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has made on me and the Government for that which he calls the rash and precipitate course which we have adopted—while I endeavour to show that neither is our conduct now inconsistent with that which we pursued in 1840, nor have we been negligent with regard to the various parties whose interests we had to consider, nor have the measures which we have taken been adopted without due consideration. The right hon. Gentleman made one charge against us which has surprised me, and that is, that two days before the meeting of Parliament, we thought fit not to promulgate an Order in Council but to allow it to sneak out through a corner of the *Gazette.* The right hon. Gentleman is not so ignorant of official business as not to know that the usual mode in which Orders in Council are promulgated is through the *Gazette*, and yet this is what he calls sneaking out. But he says it is to him most surprising that the Order in Council to which he referred should appear just two days before the meeting of Parliament. Sir, he is quite right in saying, that, for the purpose of formally issuing that Order in Council, a meeting of the Cabinet was held, and I presume his official experience will necessarily acquaint him that it is not unusual for a Cabinet Council to meet within two or three days of the assembling of Parliament, so that this ominous issuing of the Order in Council' does not arise from any very extraordinary cause. The right hon. Gentleman very singularly assumes that, because the order was issued two days before the meeting of Parliament, and because it appeared in the Government *Gazette* on the day on which Parliament assembled, it was intended to keep that order from the attention of Parliament. Now, Sir, I must say, that, if there can be any obvious means of issuing the order in such a way as that it might not escape the attention of the Parliament, it is issuing it two days before, and publishing it in the *Gazette* on the very day on which Parliament meets for the purpose of resuming its duties. But the right hon. Gentleman says that we have no authority for the course which we have thought fit to adopt, that it is not the course which his noble Friend, the noble Lord who was at the head of the Colonies, in the late Government, proposed to adopt in 1840, and that he would take a different course now. Let me remind the right hon. Gentleman that, immediately after the sitting of Parliament, when he asked me if it was my intention to lay that order on the Table of the House, I stated that not only was it my intention to lay it on the Table of the House, but that it was also my intention to accompany it with such documents as I conceived would be necessary for the elucidation of that order. As if the right hon. Gentleman did not feel satisfied with that expression of my intentions with respect to the production of that Order in Council, and of those documents, he gave notice that it was his intention to move for a copy of any Order in Council, authorising the emigration of labourers to the Mauritius. The motion was, however, not made according to the notice; it was postponed more than once, and this morning notice was given me, although the Order in Council was laid on the Table ten days ago. This morning only did I learn it was the intention of the right hon. Gentleman to go at length into the whole question of Indian emigration to the Mauritius. For the satisfaction of the right hon. Gentleman—if any satisfaction it be to him—I can state to him that no such course as he attributed has been adopted with reference to the East India Company, and that I laid on the Table of the House, with the Order in Council, the despatch of the Governor of the Mauritius and the despatch of the President of the

Board of Control, with reference to the subject. The right hon. Gentleman has expressed himself greatly surprised at the course which has been taken in issuing the Order in Council without consulting the Parliament. Now, Sir, I hope that, whether as a Member of her Majesty's Government, or in any other capacity in which I may act, I shall never be guilty of anything which should appear wanting in respect to the House, and I beg to state that it was because we thought it consistent with that which was right and proper, that we acted upon our own responsibility as Ministers of the Crown, without previously bringing the subject before the Parliament, But the right hon. Gentleman says that the course which we adopt is not consistent with the course which we thought fit to take in 1840, when the noble Lord, the Secretary for the Colonies, brought forward the subject. Now, what has been the case as regards the consistency of the course we adopt now, as compared with that which we pursued in 1840? In 1840 the noble Lord stated that it was not his intention to consult Parliament as to the course which he intended to adopt; that he would act upon his own responsibility, and that a change had taken place in his views and opinions of the subject. The noble Lord said that, in consequence of that change which had taken place in his opinions, he would not consult Parliament as to the step he felt it proper to take. But the right hon. Gentleman says that Parliament would not allow the noble Lord to adopt that course which he stated his intention of taking. Now, I may venture to say to the right hon. Gentleman, that the refusal of Parliament to permit the noble Lord to act as he intended, was rather a significant hint that the Parliament had no great confidence in the Executive, and I have no doubt that if my right hon. Friend (Sir Robert Peel) should feel it necessary to answer the right hon. Gentleman, he will tell the right hon. Gentleman that he had no great confidence in the Executive at that period. What was the case in 1840? In that year the noble Lord stated that he had altered his views on a subject on which the House had expressed previously a very strong opinion, and we protested against his introducing such a change as he had indicated, without possessing further information. But the right hon. Gentleman tells us that the course which we adopt now, in reference to the same subject, is inconsistent with the course which we adopted in 1840. Let me tell the right hon. Gentleman that the circumstances connected with the Mauritius are different from what they were in 1840. We have got more information. The proposal which is made with reference to the emigration of labourers is different from that which was proposed in 1840, and is not therefore liable to the same objections on the part of the Parliament and of the country; and if hon. Gentlemen will indulge me with a patient hearing, I will show to the House the gross abuses which formerly existed in connection with the emigration and employment of labourers, and I will also show to the House the means by which we propose to meet those evils. There were three stages in which gross abuses existed under the former system, namely, in the Mauritius, on the passage from India to the Mauritius, and in India. I do not mean, Sir, to deny that, under the system which formerly prevailed, great abuses existed in the Mauritius with regard to Indian emigrants. I will not deny that many of those people suffered great hardships, and that there had been some cases of cruelty; but I must also say that there have been great exaggerations in many statements, not only as regards the sufferings to which they were exposed in the Mauritius, but also as to the mortality which prevailed amongst them under that system. I have heard it stated, that the mortality in the Mauritius amongst Indian labourers, was worse than it had ever been amongst a similar number of labourers during the days of slavery, and I hold now in my hand a return, from which it will appear to the House that the mortality was not by any means so great amongst them as it had been represented. Taking a period of five years, namely, from the year 1834 to the year 1839, the whole amount of mortality amongst 17,028 Indian labourers in the Mauritius had been 999, making a proportion of one in seventeen, or one and one-seventeenth per cent. for five years. Is it possible, then, I ask, if there were not gross exaggerations in the statements which had been made as to the sufferings and mortality amongst those labourers in the Mauritius, that the mortality could not have been greater than an amount of one in seventeen for an average of five years, or an annual average of one in eighty-five of those 17,000 labourers imported for the whole period of five years. That appears by the return to be the state of mortality amongst those people, to whom I shall not apply the term Hill Coolies. They are Indian labourers. I objected to the injustice of the system under which those Indian labourers were formerly brought from India, to be employed in the Mauritius. The system which then prevailed was this:—A planter himself, or several planters combined, paid an agent in India, whose business it was to seek out labourers in India, who entered into agreements to emigrate to the Mauritius, and work for five years with those planters, at a rate of remuneration which was fixed in India. This agreement was made on the part of private individuals for their private interest, and the consequence of this unjust and fraudulent mode of proceeding was, that the labourer was often a virtual slave in the Mauritius during the five years for which he had contracted. The labourer found that he had no opportunity of increasing his amount of wages until the five years which he had contracted for had expired, and he found that, in consequence of advances of clothes and money in India, instead of receiving wages, he was often indebted to the planter for those advances. After having been deluded and smuggled from India, he found that he had no alternative; for he had been brought over for the private interests of the planter—for the private advantage of those who brought him over—he found, in fine, that he had been brought over under private arrangements, and to satisfy the private ends of those who induced him to go. It was under the injustice of that system that the labourer formerly suffered; and I ask how far do those objections apply to the system which we propose? The right hon. Gentleman opposite has said that he felt quite confident that Lord Ellenborough, who has now gone out to India, would be the last person in that country to assist in giving effect to the proposal which we intend to make. In reference to that statement allow me to say, that I should have greatly neglected my duty, if, long before the noble Lord had left this country, and whilst he was President of the Board of Control, I had not entered into the subject in all its details, and in every bearing which it was capable of, in repeated personal conferences with Lord Ellenborough. Before the departure of the noble Lord, all the main provisions of the proposal had been discussed with him and approved of, and he is now prepared to submit to the Council in India the measure which we propose, which is a measure that has obtained his full concurrence, and which is calculated, as far as possible, to prevent those abuses which formerly existed. There was one supposition thrown out by the right hon. Gentleman against the East India Company, which was so so unworthy of the character of that body, that I imagined there would be found some hon. Member ready upon their part to refute it. Before I allude further to the grounds upon which that supposition is founded, I will remark, with reference to the charge of rashness, that even though the Order in Council should be agreed to, and that it should be adopted by the colony of the Mauritius, yet it could not take effect, it could not be carried into operation in India, unless the Governor-general in Council, with the full concurrence of the East India Company, passed such a measure there as would remove all ground of complaint. But now let me call attention to the supposition which the right hon. Gentleman has expressed with respect to the East India Company. He says that the East India Company are connected with persons who are engaged in the growing of sugar, and he infers that in such a thinly-peopled country as India, where employment is so easily to be obtained, and so well remunerated, it is the interest of those who are engaged in the growing of sugar to retain those labourers in that country where labour is so scarce, and not to allow them to emigrate to the Mauritius; but I cannot believe that the East India Company would be actuated by such feelings, or so forgetful, not only of their character but their own interest, as to throw any obstacle in the way of free emigration of Indian labourers to a country where there is full employment for the people, and that they would rather keep them in India, where there is a superabundant and starving population, and where, in consequence of that, the rate of wages for those who are in employment is 1½*d.* a day. The right hon. Gentleman, however, asks what has happened since 1840? and evidently wishes to know why the proposal should be brought forward to introduce this system which we propose in 1842. My right hon. Friend, who sits near me, is charged with opposing the step which was taken by the Government in 1840; but in 1840 his right hon. Friend said he was not prepared to give his sanction to the change of opinion which the noble Lord (Lord John Russell) had stated to have taken place, nor did he think the sanction of the House ought to be given to it, until they heard from the Governor-general of India, and from the Governor of the Mauritius, as, till then, it would not be possible to ascertain how far it was likely to be carried beneficially into effect. Now, since 1840, we have heard from the Governor-General of India, and from the Governor of the Mauritius. And, notwithstanding the right hon. Gentleman's having read the minute of the Governor-general of India, I am prepared to show, that not only the present Governor-general of India but the former Governor, general, have expressed themselves satisfied as to the fact, that emigration from India to the Mauritius under a proper system, and with proper restrictions, might be safely conducted. Before I read any extracts from the minutes of either the Governor of the Mauritius or the Governor-general of India, let me ask who is the Governor of the Mauritius? Sir Lionel Smith. If, ever, Sir, there was a man on earth who distinguished himself under different Governments as the friend and supporter of the negroes, and by his hostility to anything like oppression on the part of the planters, it is Sir Lionel Smith. Now, I have a minute of Sir Lionel Smith in reference to the subject of the emigration and employment of Indian labourers, dated in December, 1840, and what does it say? In December, 1840, he wrote thus to the Secretary for the Colonies:—

"I was two months in the Government before I received a single complaint from Indian labourers. Circumstances over which I had no control shortly afterwards brought whole gangs to Government-house principally on experimental complaints. Several cases having occurred in which one or two of the best stipendiary magistrates deemed it their duty to cancel the engagement of labourers with their masters, according as the law provided, and to leave them perfectly free either to go back to India, or to re-engage in labour on new contracts here. They agreed to remain, and obtained other masters, at increased rates of wages from five rupees to five dollars a month, and in some instances more. Thus the Indians became suddenly acquainted how much they had been undervalued by their labour engagements contracted in India."

These are the men who were starving on 1½*d.* a day in India, and in the Mauritius, besides food and clothing, these men were earning in hard money from five rupees to five dollars a month.

"At the same time (Sir Lionel Smith continued) that it became pretty generally known that the free importation of labour was to be permitted, and that an association of planters to encourage emigration had failed, these Indians became suddenly acquainted how much they had been undervalued by their labour engagements contracted in India; and every artifice which combination and violence could suggest were immediately resorted to."

For what purpose? To get back to India? No.

"In the hopes of being released from their present contract and engagements, to serve under contracts infinitely below the rate of wages."

No wonder that when this deception was practised, no wonder that complaints were made, and that every attempt was made to rescind the contract. Sir Lionel Smith went on,—

"I am constantly accused of having no sympathies in common with the sugar planters. Perhaps I have seen too much of the sacrifice of human life and happiness in the production of sugar to enable me to confide in a class of men allied so recently to such a system; but I should be glad to disabuse the public mind in England that every labourer who finds employment here has been treated with cruelty. I will not close my letter by promising that no injustice or oppression can occur; but I will say, they are infinitely better off here than in our own overstocked country, and their mercenary habits are gratified to the ultimate advantage of England."

This was the statement of Sir Lionel Smith as to the abuses in the Mauritius. The noble Lord read the following extract from another despatch:—

"His Excellency will inform the General that, having minutely inquired into the treatment of Indian labourers, he has been enabled to report to the Secretary of State that they have, by no means, been harshly dealt with or neglected, and his Excellency is quite satisfied that the interests of the planters themselves, and the intelligence of the Indians, will equally guarantee to them the justice and good treatment of their employers in this island. His Excellency observes that no man could have entered into these inquiries with stronger suspicions than he did, from an intimate knowledge of the tricks of the planters against the new-born freemen in the West Indies; but he is satisfied with the Government that even those who are most ill-disposed may be controlled in the exercise of arbitrary or unjust conduct."

We have, since that period, other testimony from the Governor of the Mauritius, which shows that there is in that colony means of abundant protection for the Indian labourers against any injustice, fraud, or oppression. In 1838, the report of a committee for the purpose of inquiring into the possibility of remedying the evils which then existed, in connection with the emigration and employment of Indian labourers, was published, and the right hon. Gentleman opposite referred to that committee, stating that three members of it drew up a report unfavourable to the system, and that two others were favourably inclined towards it. Yes; but it ought to be recollected that the committee to which the right hon. Gentleman alluded was a committee to inquire into, and, if possible, to suggest a mode in which the abuses might be remedied, but remedied under the system which then prevailed for the regulation of the emigration and employment of the Indian labourers who went to the Mauritius under the articles obliging them to serve for five years, and with agreements made by private individuals and for private interests. Let me now call the attention of the House to the change which is proposed, in contrast with what formerly prevailed, and the means that are proposed, in order to prevent similar abuses being practised, and I only regret that the right hon. Gentleman who brought forward the subject so fully to-night had not shaped his motion so as to permit me to obtain the opinion of the House with regard to it. Under the former system the planter appointed an agent in India, who engaged and shipped off the labourers under a contract to work for the planter for five years, and therefore the interest of those agents was to secure the labourers as numerously and cheaply as possible. Now, under the system which we propose, that will be completely put a stop to. The system which we pursue is this—and I ask the House if there is anything contained in it in the slightest degree indicating the most remote approach to slavery or forced labour—it is proposed that the colony of the Mauritius shall be entitled to pass a vote permitting the payment, at the expense of the colony, for the free emigration of labourers, but that emigration is to take place only from whatever part in India the Governor-General may approve of, and there is to be at each such port in India an agent, appointed by the Governor-general, and paid by the colony, of the Mauritius, who is to see every emigrant in person, and to ascertain whether such emigrant is about to leave the country of his own accord, and whether he is perfectly aware of the conditions under which he is to go. He is also to ascertain if the emigrant has been deluded by false expectations as to the amount of wages, and to inform the emigrant that any contract he may make in India will not be binding on him in the Mauritius, but that when he shall arrive there, he may go where he pleases. The agent is also to see that the ships are properly supplied with provisions, and to see that an interpreter goes out with every body of emigrants before he allows the ship to sail. There is also a list to be furnished of the emigrants to be taken, with their names, and a description of each individual, and no ship is to be cleared out of any port in India with emigrants, unless the agent sees on the spot that all those provisions are complied with. Is that all that is to be done? No; for when the labourers arrive in the Mauritius, they are not to be let loose, exposed to fraud or imposition—no; at Port Louis, which is the only port in the Mauritius at which such ships will be allowed to enter there again, a Government agent will be appointed by the Governor-general of India to reside, and it will be his duty to compare the lists which the ships shall bring, with the lists that shall have been taken in India; for one great evil formerly arose from the ships dropping down the river, and allowing an opportunity for smuggling emigrants on board. The agent is also to inquire of each emigrant whether he has any complaint to make of the treatment he received, and he is to be again informed that no contract which he made in India is valid or binding on him in the Mauritius, and that he is perfectly free to go where he pleases, and that for forty-eight hours he is to make no contract, and that he is to make no contract for a longer period than a single year. These are the measures adopted by Government for the protection of the labourer, and I ask whether it be possible to adopt a more precautionary system? In India, a labourer is very well satisfied if he can earn 1½*d.* a-day, out of which he has to provide himself with food. In the Mauritius, the ordinary rate of wages is from 5 rupees to 10 rupees per month, in addition to food and clothing. If, therefore, a labourer be dissatisfied with his condition in the Mauritius, he may, in a short time, by the exercise of ordinary industry, realize a sufficient sum of money to pay his passage back to India; for if he be disposed to return, he is not, as formerly, bound by any contract he might have entered into to continue in the colony for five years. At the expiration of five years' service in the colony, if the labourer wish to return to India, he is not only at perfect liberty to do so, but he is to have the right to claim a free passage at the expense of the colony of the Mauritius. It is, therefore, the interest of the colony to import only such persons as are likely to remain; for, as the colony bears the expense of their passage, it would—if the emigrants were dissatisfied, and returned to India—have to suffer the loss of the money which had been paid for their importation. The temptation under the former scheme was to wring from the emigrants as great an amount of labour at as low a rate of remuneration as possible, and thus they were rendered dissatisfied and discontented. The tendency of the present plan is, I consider, to render them contented and comfortable. I cannot refrain from citing a few passages from the minute of the Governor-general, to which reference has been made by the right hon. Gentleman who introduced this subject. The right hon. Gentleman stated that he thought it appeared evident from this document, that the Governor-general entertained a very doubtful opinion as to the policy of allowing persons to emigrate to the Mauritius. Under the present plan many labourers had returned to India from the Mauritius, and had deposited in the hands of their families considerable sums of money, the produce of their industry; and, although they were now anxious to return to the Mauritius, they were prevented from doing so by the present prohibitory law, which precluded persons who had returned to India from the Mauritius from again proceeding to the colony. But I ask whether, upon any principle of reason, we can legislate to prevent the subjects of her Majesty, who are perfectly aware of the consequences of the step they are taking, from proceeding from one part of her Majesty's dominions to another, in order to dispose of their labour to the best advantage? What is the opinion of the Governor-general? The Governor-general has arrived at no such conclusion as that assumed by the right hon. Gentleman. The Governor-general said—

> "The attention which I have been able to give to the subject has led me to no very satisfactory general conclusion upon it, embracing as it does the difficult question of opening emigration to many distant and even foreign colonies."

[Mr. *V. Smith*: I read that passage.] But the right hon. Gentleman did not read what follows. The Governor-general proceeds—

> "I am clearly of opinion that the present law, which to a great degree restricts the freedom of labour and of movement to the whole Indian population, is most objectionable in principle; that it will presently become injurious and vexatious in operation; that it should not be regarded as permanent, and that no safe opportunity should be omitted of relaxing it."

Those words the right hon. Gentleman did not read to the House. The right hon. Gentleman had also selected this passage from the minute—

> "I cannot indulge the hope that we should yet be able successfully to enforce safeguards for the due protection and superintendence of an unlimited number of common emigrant labourers."

But he did not read these passages—

> "The impression to be taken from the evidence of the Coolies who have returned, is, I think, upon the whole, most favourable; and it may be assumed, in regard to the Mauritius, that where there have been prudence and good conduct, and an average share of good fortune, a Cooly may return, after a few years of labour in that colony, enriched and improved, and for the most part bearing with him the recollection of no great hardship. Could this system fairly be carried out? Could a number of voluntary and industrious adventurers annually leave India for countries where labour is more highly paid than it is here, and could nearly the same number annually return, each with an average of capital of from 100 to 200 rupees, with some acquirements in cultivation and manufacture, and with his wits sharpened by experience, I think that such a course would have an excellent effect upon the country, and be a source of general advantage, and, in the end, many of the abuses which have been

found to exist would work their own cure, and men would teach each other the manner in which fraud, and exaction, and violence, are to be guarded against. In this view, and under ordinary circumstances, and if the slave-trade and slavery had never been, we might, perhaps, approach the question of an open emigration with some hope of devising checks which might be relied on as generally effectual against abuse."

The right hon. Gentleman quoted this passage referring to the difficulty of an open emigration, but he did not state the exception of the Governor-general—

"It will be for her Majesty's Government to decide whether distinctions as to the supply of labour can be admitted between the several Crown settlements. As respects the interests for which we are more specially responsible, I would say that my objections are assuredly the strongest to dealings of this description with the colonies and settlements which are most distant. The sea passage to them is, from its very length, liable to suffering and to hazard; we could not follow the emigrant with our care and protection, and we do not know to what laws or usages he might be consigned. At the Mauritius, however, the case is different. It is a British settlement, easily accessible from India, and open to our observation; and if the question were that of opening emigration to that island alone, I would willingly attempt to meet the difficulties which might be opposed to us, and I should hope speedily and gradually, in a very great measure, to overcome them by a plan similar to that suggested by Mr. Grant."

The Governor-general was prepared to approach the question of open emigration, but if a distinction were drawn with regard to the Mauritius, he had no hesitation in saying that he was prepared to grapple with those difficulties. What did the Governor-general propose to do?

"By the appointment of a distinct 'protector' of emigrants, by the inspection and limitation of contracts, by the prohibition of money advances, and by the regulation of shipping, and the other rules proposed, we might, I think, do much in the few ports from which emigration to the Mauritius might be limited, and for some stated number of emigrants, towards the entire suppression of those abuses of which three or four years ago there was too much reason to complain; we could at the same time satisfy ourselves that the measures adopted in the Mauritius for the protection of the labourers when on the island are operative and sufficient."

The right hon. Gentleman drew attention to what the Governor-general concluded, and this was another instance, perhaps, of an unintentional omission, but it was a singular one. "Look," said the right hon. Gentleman, "at the conclusion to which the Governor-general came:—

'If you can send out a few skilled labourers I can see no objection to that.'"

Was that the conclusion to which the Governor-general came? After stating that he had no doubt on the question as to the Mauritius, but that he had some as to all the colonies, the Governor-general concluded thus:—

"I have known, since I have been in India, contracts for buildings in the Mauritius sent to Calcutta, and carpenters, smiths, and painters, go out, at high salaries, for their execution. It cannot be intended that such transactions should be perpetually closed; and, apart from the important question of free emigration and of colonial labour, and yet as not unconnected with them, I should be glad if steps could be devised for the gradual modification of this most anomalous law. If, therefore, all plans for an extended emigration should be for the present rejected by the home authorities, and if the expediency of some relaxation of the existing law should, nevertheless, be admitted, I should be disposed to regulate but little as to this skilled labour."

"But," said the Governor-general, "that was the conclusion to which the right hon. Gentleman came." The Governor-general said no such thing. What the Governor-general said was this:—

"If the Home Government are opposed to more extended emigration, then, at all events, I will press on them to repeal this most anomalous law with regard to emigration to the Mauritius."

I will appeal to the House, whether the right hon. Gentleman, in quoting from those papers, has quoted them in such a way as to give their effect fairly to the House? The right hon. Gentleman referred to the opinions of Mr. Bird, Mr. Princeps, and Mr. Amos. One of those gentlemen certainly admitted, that he objected to the relaxations of the present law, but not on the grounds of the hardship that it inflicted, but on the ground that there was no superfluity of labour in India: and that the people there were anxious to obtain a greater supply of labour than they were able to procure. The two other gentlemen, Mr. Amos and Mr. Princeps, expressed themselves favourable to emigration. I certainly thought that the right hon. Gentleman had spoken in terms of the report of these gentlemen which he saw no reason for. The right hon. Gentleman said, that those two gentlemen had acted in concert; but I see nothing in the documents referred to, to warrant that supposition. On the contrary, though those gentlemen differed on other points, they concurred in thinking that this law ought to be relaxed, though upon the amount of relaxation they were not agreed. The right hon. Gentleman has accused me of having acted hastily in this matter, because, having the authority of the Governor-general of India, and of the Governor of the Mauritius, for believing that with proper precautions the law might be safely relaxed, I have, with the concurrence of the Governor-general of India, and with the concurrence of the Board of Control, devised safe and efficient means for the remedy of the evils complained of. I will tell the right hon. Gentleman that he must know well that no person was more anxious for the speedy relaxation of this law than the noble Lord the late Secretary for the Colonies. In the last despatch written by the directions of the noble Lord on this subject, and dated the 30th of August, 1841, it is stated that the noble Lord

> "Entertained a strong opinion in favour of the removal of his restrictions, and the modification of this law, provided that proper precautions were taken to secure the health and good treatment of those individuals during their passage, and their return to their own country."

Her Majesty's Government have taken those precautions. They have taken the same precautions exactly, with some additions, as the late Secretary for the Colonies took with respect to the emigration of labourers from the coast of Africa to the West Indies. These regulations were framed for the prevention of abuse, and since they have been adopted there has not been a word of complaint against them from any individual. The case which I have now presented to the House is the case on which I hope the House will be of opinion that the conduct pursued by her Majesty's Government on this subject is perfectly consistent with the course which they felt it to be their duty to take in 1840—and that they cannot be charged with having rashly or harshly dealt with this great question. They have taken every precaution for the security and advantage of the labourer. They have given the Governor-general of India the best advice which practical experience enables them to offer as to the precautions to be taken there for the same purpose—and they have made a further provision that unless those recommendations were carried into effect, the system of emigration now proposed was not to take place. The right hon. Gentleman talked of the Passengers Act, and said that he had been taken by surprise. Surely the right hon. Gentleman could not be more taken by surprise than I am by the right hon. Gentleman's motion. On bringing forward my motion for leave to introduce the bill to which the right hon. Gentleman has alluded, I stated that my object was, to secure the adoption of additional precautions with respect to emigration from the United Kingdom to the colonies. The right hon. Gentleman said, that my object, in the course I have taken respecting emigration from India, is to evade the notice of Parliament. Now, on the contrary, I have inserted clauses in the Passengers Act specially applying to this particular emigration; and these clauses were introduced for this reason:—Supposing that there may be certain penalties provided for the violation of the regulations with respect to the emigration of labourers from India, the Governor-general, though he had the power to punish the infractions of these regulations in India, would not have the power to do so in the Mauritius. These clauses, therefore, have been inserted for the purpose of authorising these regulations, in order that, if they should chance to be violated, that would be an offence against a British act of Parliament, and would be liable to be punished accordingly. These, then, are the clauses on which the right hon. Gentleman has founded his accusation that I intended to evade the notice of Parliament. I only regret that the right hon. Gentleman has not so shaped his motion as to afford me the opportunity of taking the sense of the House on the course which has been taken by her Majesty's Government. Whenever the right hon. Gentleman may think fit to bring forward a vote of condemnation with respect to that conduct, I shall be ready to meet him, even at the risk of again wearying the House with this subject. As the right hon. Gentleman has moved for documents which are not in existence, it is of little consequence whether I consent to his motion or not. However, I will pursue the course of giving the right hon. Gentleman an opportunity of taking the sense of the House by giving a negative to his ridiculous motion.

Mr. *Hawes* did not intend to discuss this question; but whenever those clauses that had been referred to should be in committee, he would endeavour to show the noble Lord that they did not provide those precautions which he had stated. He undertook to say that when all the papers should be fairly considered they would lead to a different conclusion from that which had been stated by the noble Lord. He was willing to concur in the eulogium which the noble Lord had expressed respecting the character of Sir Lionel Smith. But when he came to refer to those despatches of Sir L. Smith, on which the noble Lord called them to rely, they found that he spoke of the planters of the Mauritius as men who were still mourning over the loss of their slaves. Men of this description were not those to whom they should be inclined to entrust the carrying out of regulations of this kind. The noble Lord might possibly be able to carry into effect his proposed regulations with respect to India, and the passage by sea, but with respect to his success in the Mauritius, he entertained a different opinion. He, when the noble Lord's bill should be in committee, meant to move that those clauses of the bill to which he objected should be expunged. He did not mean to do this in condemnation of the Government, for he believed that the noble Lord had no other object in those regulations but the good of those individuals. But he did not think that those clauses would answer that purpose. He hoped the noble Lord would shortly be able to have the bill in committee.

Lord *Stanley* was anxious to forward the bill at as early a period as possible. He hoped the hon. Member would not object to proceed with the clauses up to the 41st clause (postponing those to which he objected). With respect to those clauses to which he objected, the hon. Member gave ample notice of the time when they would be considered in committee.

Mr. *Hawes* said, that arrangement would be perfectly satisfactory.

Mr. *Hogg* did not think that the conclusions of the noble Lord, the Member for North Lancashire, were borne out by the documents to which he had referred, nor did he think that the House had been correctly apprised how the matter stood in India, and in this country. In Calcutta a most influential public meeting had been convened, and all present were loud in their execration of the deception and cruelty which had been practised almost universally on the helpless natives who had been withdrawn from their homes. In consequence of that public meeting, a committee was appointed by the local government, and to the report of that committee, he would presently have occasion to refer. In this country the subject had been taken up by both Houses of Parliament. In the Lords, legislation on the subject had been attempted by Lord Ellenborough, aided by no mean coadjutor, the Duke of Wellington, but the difficulties that presented themselves were so great, that the bill was abandoned. In that House the subject had been repeatedly discussed, and he believed that his right hon. Friend who introduced the subject, had stated pretty accurately its course. He remembered well that when the noble Lord, the late Secretary for the Colonies, intimated his intention to relax the Order in Council, up got his right hon. Friend, the present Secretary for the Home Department, and cautioned the Government to beware how they proceeded in a matter of such delicacy and difficulty; suggesting that no change should be made in the prohibitory law, except by bill, and painted the enormities which existed in such glowing colours, that the noble Lord, who was not the least adventurous of politicians, shrunk from the task he had undertaken. A few evenings afterwards the noble Lord stated, that after what had occurred, he did not think it would be respectful to Parliament to make any alteration in the law until their opinion had been taken. Thus the matter stood, with respect to that House: an assurance had been given by the late government that no alteration in the law should be made, without taking the opinion of Parliament, and he (Mr. Hogg) thought that the present Government ought to have regarded that pledge as binding upon them. The Court of Directors had repeatedly written out to the local government, stating that they could not sanction any change in the existing law, while the matter was pending before Parliament, thus showing a deference to that House, which he admitted had not been evinced by the noble Lord, the Member for North Lancashire. The Court of Directors had stated that they would not stir in the matter until Parliament had pronounced its opinion, and desired that in the interim the existing law should neither be annulled nor relaxed. Thus the matter then stood, and wherein, he asked, was it now altered? The only alteration was the receipt of the report of the committee, which more than confirmed all the statements which caused the prohibitory enactments. When the question was last under discussion, his right hon. Friend, the Secretary for the Home Department, dwelt strongly on the absence of information, and said, "Wait till the report of the committee has been received." He (Mr. Hogg) did the same, and stated his belief that the report would be very shortly received. Indeed, he had been taunted by his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Liskeard, with venturing to state the very day on which it might be looked for. True it was, he had rashly ventured on the perilous sea of prophecy, but the winds and the waves had proved favourable, and the report did arrive the very day he had predicted "*sic me servavit Apollo.*" He would not weary the House by referring to the report or the voluminous evidence on which it was founded, but he would state without fear of contradiction, that the noble Lord could not refer to that report, as a justification for the proceeding he had adopted. Sir Lionel Smith, in adverting to the subject, spoke of the strong terms of the report, said it was highly coloured, and added, that it deserved no further notice. Now that was not a fit or becoming way to speak of a report, which had been made, under the order of the Governor-general, by six gentlemen selected by him. [An hon. *Member:* Only three signed it.] Even so, one of the six had left India, and three of the remaining five had signed it, and a report so made, and so signed, ought not to have been described by Sir Lionel Smith, as deserving of no notice. But suppose that report to have been less unfavourable to the view of the noble Lord, and that he had been able to refer to it as justifying his intended measures, what, he asked, was the course that ought to have been pursued. He (Mr. Hogg) was not well versed in parliamentary forms; but after what had already taken place in that House, he should have thought that the noble Lord would have deemed it fit and proper to have submitted to the Board of Control his proposed measures respecting the Mauritius, (which is under his own management,) saying to the President of the Board, "If you will induce the Home Government of India, to authorise the modification of the existing law, here are the protections and the safeguard which I offer you." These protections and safeguards ought then to have been submitted to the Court of Directors, who ought to have considered them, viewed the whole case, and pronounced their opinion at length in instructions to the local government; such instructions, with the Order in Council of the noble Lord, ought to have been laid on the Table of the House, and it would then have been for the House to have said aye or no, whether the contemplated alterations should take place. The noble Lord, however, had deemed it right to dispense with all this caution and consideration, and he must add, that although he was a member of the Court of Directors, he had never heard of the contemplated modification of the law, until he read the Order in Council in the *Gazette.* With respect to the Mauritius, he admitted the value and importance of the regulations proposed by the noble Lord, which would go far to do away the abuses there. The great and paramount evils existed in India, in the organised system of kidnapping and trepanning the natives, and he wished to know, and the House had a right to know, what provisions and regulations were proposed to prevent the recurrence of such evils. Indeed, he was not sure, after what had passed, that the House ought not to require the proposed local enactment to be sent home, placed on the Table of the House, and examined by the Legislature, before it was allowed to have the force of law. The abuses in India were admitted, and the sole question was, whether it would be practicable to prevent them, if the present law were annulled or relaxed. The noble Lord talked a great deal about protectors and inspectors, but what said Lord Auckland to all this cumbrous machinery? Why, he said it was utterly useless; and he said so with good reason, because every one of these arrangements existed at Calcutta at the time the abuses complained of took place. The temptation to fraud and abuse was so great, that he (Mr. Hogg) feared it was vain to attempt to legislate for its prevention. Without entering into details, he would show the House how absolutely certain it was that the great proportion of those who proceeded to the Mauritius must have been induced to go on ship-board by the grossest misrepresentation, fraud, and deceit; and for that purpose he would read an extract from the examination of Mr. Dowson, who was himself engaged in exporting Indian labourers to the Mauritius. The question asked him was—

> "Are you aware whether the Coolies are informed that they are to go by sea to a distant place, and to be absent from India for five years?"

His answer is—

> "I am nearly sure no representation of the kind is ever made to them; and, as a proof of this, I beg to state that, on my return from the Mauritius in November last, I was so desirous to crush the Duffadar system, which I consider most vicious, that at a considerable expense I engaged a highly respectable Armenian—a Mr. Carapiet, to proceed to Chutah Nagpore, the district where the Dhaugas live. He was the bearer of letters to Dr. Cheek, of Burdwou, and Capt. Wilkinson, Governor-general's agent of the district. My orders to Mr. Carapiet were, to engage no Coolie without first explaining to him the nature of the employment, and that he was to leave his country for a period of five years. It proved a fruitless mission, for Mr. Carapiet did not succeed in procuring a single Coolie, and that, too, at the very time that Duffadars sent by Mr. Hughes were engaging Coolies by hundreds in the immediate vicinity."

He entreated the attention of the House to this evidence of Mr. Dowson, who admits that the firm of which he was a member, had exported 6000 Coolies to the Mauritius, and who was, therefore, eminently interested in the maintenance of the system. He shows you, that not a single Coolie can be induced to leave his native hills, when it is truly explained to him that he is to proceed to a distance and by sea, and be long absent from his home; while at the same time, and in the same locality, they are procured by hundreds by means of the fraud and misrepresentation resorted to by the unprincipled Duffadars or native agents. He would give the House a still stronger proof that the Hill Coolies, when left to themselves, and fully apprised of their destination, were not disposed to emigrate to places beyond the confines of India, even when not required to proceed by sea. The House was probably aware that a company, with a very large capital, had been established for the cultivation of the tea plantations in Assam, and he need not dwell on the importance of giving every possible aid and encouragement to that enterprise. The company applied to Government, stating that their plantations were going to decay from their inability to procure labour, and entreating the aid and influence of Government to induce the Hill Coolies to emigrate to Assam, stating their willingness to allow them never less than three rupees a month for their labour, with land to cultivate free of expense for five years, and to pay besides their travelling expenses. The Government accordingly authorized the public officers in the districts where the Coolies dwell to explain to them the advantages that were offered, and to induce them, by all fair means, to emigrate to Assam; but I hold in my hand extracts from letters from Capt. Wilkinson, Mr. Davidson, and Major Ouseley, Government agents in the different districts, stating that they could not induce a single Coolie to leave their homes. This was evidence beyond all contradiction or suspicion, to prove that the Coolies would not expatriate themselves, when their destination was fully explained to them. He admitted they were migratory, but their habit was to proceed to the plains for a few months, to assist in the manufacture of indigo and sugar, returning to their own homes so as to be able to attend to their own cultivation. If the Government would only introduce a measure which would satisfy him that they should be left entirely to their own inclinations, he (Mr. Hogg) would say at once, that he would not offer a word in objection to annulling the existing regulation; but he thought he had established that up to the present time, that inclination had not been consulted, and that in the absence of fraud, no labourer from among the Coolie race could be induced to emigrate. The noble Lord had concluded very triumphantly by referring to Lord Auckland's opinions on this subject, and he endeavoured to make the House believe, that that Nobleman was favourable to general and unlimited emigration; and that he only suggested a restriction in deference to prejudices existing in this country. He begged to tell the noble Lord, that he was not borne out in that statement by Lord Auckland's minute. Lord Auckland had not stated it as his opinion, that the measure should be repealed; he only said, he should be glad to see it relaxed, particularly with regard to artisans who are in the habit of contracting for building in the Mauritius and elsewhere, and who might be prevented by the existing measure from continuing that course. He must say, that unless this subject were most cautiously dealt with, and unless we had some assurance that satisfactory arrangements had been entered into with the European powers, who had settlements in India, and with the native independent powers, who had territory on the coast, we should be virtually renewing the Slave-trade, if we removed the existing restriction; and we should utterly destroy the moral influence that has hitherto attended our exertions and representations for the purpose of abolishing that odious traffic throughout the east. Such, too, was the opinion of Lord Auckland, who states, that if we could not depend on the co-operation of the European powers having possessions in India, we should not be justified in opening the emigration, even to the Mauritius. The evidence of the Coolies who had returned to India, had been much dwelt upon. Now, the Coolies who had been so examined, were only about twenty-five in number, out of upwards of 17,000 who had emigrated, and when so much was said of the wealth, the satisfaction and the happiness of those twenty-five, he could not refrain from expressing his apprehension, that they had probably returned with the intention of decoying others; and that their evidence could not be much relied upon. It might be thought that in what he had said, he had expressed strong opinions against emigration; he assured the House, however, that he had not said a word that was not dictated by an imperious sense of duty. He admitted fully that it was the right of every man to carry his labour to the best market, and he (Mr. Hogg) was not one who desired to contravene that principle. But the House would at the same time admit, that considerations, not only of humanity, but of policy, rendered it imperative on them to see that those were protected, who were unable to protect themselves. It was all very well to talk of protecting the few individuals of spirit and enterprize who might wish to emigrate from India, for the purpose of bettering their fortunes, but where, he asked, was the liberty, where the protection, and where the consideration, for the hundreds and thousands who by fraud and falsehood had been deluded to leave their homes. The Government, he thought, had a very clear course to pursue on this subject. They should lay on the Table of the House all the papers connected with it, without any exception; all the dispatches of the Court of Directors, and the Indian Government—all the communications from the Mauritius—all the orders in council, and above all, the measures and provisions intended to be introduced for the prevention of abuses in India, and of which there was not at present one tittle before the House. The House would then be in a condition to judge of the expediency of annulling or modifying the existing restrictions. The misfortune of the present discussion was, that it could only lead to an expression of opinion, and not to any practical result.

Mr. *Wakley* said, that the noble Lord the Secretary for the Colonies had made no statement respecting females and children. An opinion was very generally entertained by the people of this country that the system of the emigration of Hill Coolies would lead to a sort of legalized slave-trade. How, indeed, could the House entertain a doubt that such would be the result, after the admirable and lucid speech of the hon. Member for Beverley? That hon. Gentleman had treated the question in a manner which reflected on his character and conduct the highest possible credit. It was curious to observe the contrast between the policy pursued on this question and on that of the Corn-laws. The landowners maintained the Corn-laws on the ground that their repeal would lead to the injury of the home grower from the competition of foreign agriculturists, while they permitted the importation of foreign labourers from India into a market already overstocked with cheap labour, which could have no other effect than to increase the existing distress. Nothing could be more unjust than the manner in which they proposed to deal with those unfortunate creatures, overpowering them with the cheaper labour of the East Indies. The information which this House had obtained to-night ought to induce them to pause before lending any countenance to a system fraught with so much danger, and which might end in so much suffering. When a bill of this kind was introduced by the Whig Government, he was delighted at the manner in which it was received by the present Government. The right hon. Baronet the present First Lord of the Treasury was doubtful of its propriety. The present Home Secretary called upon the House to pause as the measure was pregnant with danger, and all the additional information which had since been received only showed still more forcibly the necessity of caution. The right hon. Baronet could not have forgotten a deputation which had waited upon him shortly after he came into office on the subject of slavery. They had hoped that he would have introduced some measure relative to that subject before this time, for slavery existed to an enormous extent in our possessions in India. He mentioned the subject in the hope that the right hon. Baronet would be able before long to make some statement to the House on the subject of slavery generally, but with regard to the particular subject before the House, he hoped the noble Lord the Secretary for the Colonies would be induced to abandon the intention he had avowed, after what he had heard from the hon. Member for Beverley, that he would not persevere in that clause of the bill which would go to continue the exportation of Hill Coolies from India to the Mauritius. He might depend upon it that the permanence of that system would be fraught with calamities; for the cupidity of capitalists would overrule all the precautions that he could take. He hoped, also, that the noble Lord would present all the information in possession of the Colonial-office, in order that the House might be able to judge how far it would be fair and just to those who were subsisting upon some three or four rupees a month, to inundate their labour market in the Mauritius, to their serious detriment.

Mr. *C. Buller* declared that his opinions on this question were unaltered; he held the same opinions now as he had held when on the other side of the House, and supported the Government scheme as in substance a good, wise, and necessary measure. He was glad the noble Lord had adopted, with some slight alterations in the details, the same bill as that proposed by the noble Lord the late Secretary for the Colonies. He could not but express his gratification that the removal of the members of the present Government from the one side of the House to the other had done away with obstacles which appeared formerly to exist in their minds in the way of sound legislation, and he also hailed it as a very wholesome repentance, and turning away from sin. As regarded the manner of this legislation, however, he thought the Government were chargeable with considerable neglect of proper precaution. He did not see why so important an Order in Council should have appeared only two days before the meeting of Parliament. As it had been so long deferred, it would have been better to have waited a little longer, so that Parliament might have expressed an opinion on the subject. Considering, too, that this Government had come in as a meditative Government, that their essential principle was to think, and take time, and consider the measures they were to propose, he could not but think it singular that they should not have concerted measures with the East India Company before this. Any attempt to settle this question without their interference must necessarily be nugatory. The only answer of the noble Lord was to ridicule his hon. Friend for moving for a paper that did not exist. Then were they to understand that the Government had entered on this measure without proper communications with the East India Company? He hoped the natural light of Lord Ellenborough's mind would be sufficient to guide him in the absence of any instructions. Under whatever circumstances, however, the measure had been brought forward, he should afford to it that cordial co-operation which was refused by hon. Gentlemen opposite, when it was proposed by that side of the House.

Lord *Stanley* in explanation, said, that it was erroneous to suppose there had been no communication with the East India Company. He had had full, anxious, and repeated conversations with Lord Ellenborough on all the details of the subject. He had had those conversations with him when he was President of the Board of Control, and, since his departure, with the present President. All he could say was, that the motion was made for the production of papers over which he had no power. All communications with the East India Company were made through the Board of Control. No disrespect was meant to the East India Company. He had written through the medium of the Board of Control, stating his opinion as to what the legislative enactments should be, and at the same time he had sent all the correspondence and instruction in detail, which had been left by Lord John Russell, and on which he hoped the provisions would be framed. The East India Company thought it better to wait until they received further information. He had done all that he could do in the regular mode.

Mr. *H. Lindsay* said, that, when in India, he saw the practices resorted to for the purpose of inducing the Hill Coolies to go abroad; it was a system of downright kidnapping, the men did not know where they were to be sent. It was just, then, that they should be protected from being dragged away to another country; but was it not to some extent inflicting slavery upon them, to say they should be prohibited by law from quitting their country and carrying their labour wherever they pleased. It should be recollected that the natives of India were freemen, and that they had common sense to guide them. He hoped that, in the contemplated measure, a clear provision would be inserted, that before quitting India the Hill Coolies should have explained to them what was the object of their going, what would be their employment in the Mauritius, and that they would have entire freedom there, and the protection of the British law.

Mr. *Forbes* thought, that the noble Lord the Secretary for the Colonies had conferred not only a service upon the Mauritius but upon this country also by his conduct in this business. He hoped the noble Lord would by his measures be enabled to effect such an improvement in the price of sugar as would give satisfaction to all parties.

Mr. *V. Smith* said, that as there were no instructions to be produced upon this subject by the noble Lord, he begged leave to withdraw his motion.

Motion withdrawn.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, March 2, 1842.

MINUTES.] NEW MEMBER. Viscount Howick, for Sunderland.

BILLS. *Public.*—2°. Colonial Passengers.

3°. Van Diemen's Land; Marriages (Ireland).

Private.—1°. Glasgow, Paisley, Kilmarnock, and Ayr Railway; Ormesby Inclosure; West Stirlingshire Roads (No. 1).

2°. South Eastern Railway.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Mr. Jarvis, from Chester, Dr. Bowring, from St. Mawes, Mr. Forster, from Berwick-upon-Tweed, Sir W. Clay, from Blackwall, and Hackney, Mr. M. Phillips, from Manchester, Mr. Horsman, from Denton, and Haughton, Mr. Wallace, from Muirkirk, and other hon. Members, from Stranaer, South Shields, St. Andrew's, and Aberdeen, for the Repeal of the Corn-laws.—By an hon. Member, from Farmers of Cambridge, against the proposed Measure on the Corn-laws; and from J. M. Daykin, Corn Inspector for Guildford, for Compensation.—By Sir R. Bateson, Viscount Jocelyn, and Mr. Litton, from Kilsea, Lecumper, Rathpreland, Macosquin, Dunboe, and Newry, for Legalizing certain Marriages by Dissenters.—By Mr. T. Wood, and the Earl of March, from St. George's Bloomsbury, Walworth-road, and Northern Boundary of the City of London, for the Redemption of Tolls on Metropolitan Bridges.—By Mr. Manners Sutton, from Wm. Bullock, for Universal Suffrage.—By Sir C. Douglas, from Liverpool, against the Borough Improvements and Building Regulations Bills.—By Mr. Duncombe, from Samuel Cobham, and others, for Legislation to give Security to Railway Travelling.—By Mr. Ormsby Gore, from Leitrim, and Mr. Litton, from Coleraine, against the proposed Reduction of Duty on Foreign Oats.—From Coleraine, for Mail Communication between Scotland and Ireland.—By Mr. Aglionby, from Carlisle, for Inquiry into Distress.—By an hon Member, from G. R. W. Baxter, for Inquiring into Committing two Inmates of St. Giles's Workhouse for Singing a Song.

CHALLENGE OF JURORS (IRELAND).] Mr. *O'Connell* begged to ask the Solicitor-general for Ireland, whether there was any difference between the instructions given by the present Attorney-general, to Crown prosecutors going circuit, regarding the challenge of jurors, and those given by the late Attorney-general, and if any, what difference.

Mr. *Jackson* said, that before he left Ireland, the Attorney-general had received the instructions given by several of his predecessors, and considering that those given by the present Lord Chief Baron, when Attorney-general were, upon the whole, most satisfactory, he had directed them to be followed.

Subject at an end.

MOVEMENT OF TROOPS (SCOTLAND).] Mr. *Fox Maule* understanding that troops had been removed from Aberdeen to Huntley, in the neighbourhood of Glass, where a minister was about to be inducted on the presentation of the patron, begged to ask the Lord Advocate whether that removal had taken place in consequence of a representation from the sheriff of the County of Aberdeen? and if so, whether that representation had been accompanied by a declaration from the sheriff that he had reason to anticipate such disturbance in Glass as rendered it necessary to have troops in the immediate neighbourhood.

Sir *James Graham* was somewhat surprised that such a question should be put by the hon. Gentleman, considering his official experience. His answer was, that the fact was true; certain troops had been removed. But as to the object and purpose which induced her Majesty's Government to direct it, he must positively decline giving any answer whatever. The only answer he could give was, that her Majesty's Government were responsible for the maintenance of the peace in Scotland.

AFFGHANISTAN.] Mr. *Mangles* wished

to ask the right hon. Gentleman, the First Lord of the Treasury, whether her Majesty's Government were in possession of any later information with regard to Affghanistan, than that which had been already laid before the House.

Sir *R. Peel* said, that no accounts direct from Cabul or Candahar were in the possession of the Government of a later date than those of which he believed the public were in possession. There were accounts from Calcutta, of a later date; but the accounts from Calcutta were not founded on direct official information conveyed from Affghanistan to Calcutta, but on private letters, conveying intelligence which it was very improbable, could be called in question. That intelligence was such as to create considerable anxiety, but, as it was not official, he was not enabled to communicate it. There was every reason to believe that in the course of a few days they would have accounts direct from Affghanistan. He did not know whether the hon. Gentleman had made any special reference to the reports which had appeared of a surrender having taken place. No such achaving been received by her Majesty's Government.

Mr. *Mangles* referred to reports of negotiations for capitulation.

Sir *R. Peel* said, there were no accounts of that character. The intelligence, as he had said, was calculated to create anxiety, but there were no accounts of a negotiation being actually entered into, and still less, any account of a surrender.

Subject at an end.

CORN LAWS—MINISTERIAL PLAN. REPORT OF THE RESOLUTIONS.] On the motion that the first resolution be read a second time,

Mr. *Greene*, the Chairman of the Committee, brought up the report of the resolutions on the Corn Importation Acts, which was read as follows:—

1. "That the following duties shall be paid upon the importation of corn, grain, meal, or flour, in lieu of the duties now payable thereon: viz.:—

If imported from any foreign country;

WHEAT.

Whenever the average price of wheat, made up and published in the manner required by law, shall be, for every quarter,

Under 51*s*. the duty shall be, for every quarter		20*s*.
51*s*. and under	52*s*.	19
52*s*. and under	55*s*.	Duty 18*s*.
55	56	17
56	57	16
57	58	15
58	59	14
59	60	13
60	61	12
61	62	11
62	63	10
63	64	9
64	65	8
65	66	7
66	69	6
69	70	5
70	71	4
71	72	3
72	73	2
73 and upwards		1

BARLEY.

Whenever the average price of barley, made up and published in the manner required by law, shall be, for every quarter,

Under 26*s*. the duty shall be, for every quarter		11*s*.
26*s*. and under	27*s*.	10
27	30	9
30	31	8
31	32	7
32	33	6
33	34	5
34	35	4
35	36	3
36	37	2
37 and upwards		1

OATS.

Whenever the average price of oats, made up and published in the manner required by law, shall be, for every quarter,

Under 19*s*. the duty shall be, for every quarter		8*s*.
19*s*. and under	20*s*.	7
20	23	6
23	24	5
24	25	4
25	26	3
26	27	2
27 and upwards		1

RYE, PEASE, AND BEANS.

Whenever the average price of rye, or of pease, or of beans, made up and published in the manner required by law, shall be, for every quarter,

Under 30*s*. the duty shall be, for every quarter		11*s*.	6*d*.
30*s*. and under	33*s*.	10	6
33	34	9	6
34	35	8	6
35	36	7	6
36	37	6	6
37	38	5	6
38	39	4	6
39	40	3	6
40	41	2	6
41	42	1	6
42 and upwards		1	0

Wheat Meal and Flour.

For every barrel, being one hundred and ninety-six pounds;

A duty equal in amount to the duty payable on thirty-eight and a half gallons of wheat.

Oatmeal.

For every quantity of one hundred and eighty-one pounds and a half;

A duty equal in amount to the duty payable on a quarter of oats.

Maize or Indian Corn, Buck Wheat, Bear, or Bigg.

For every quarter;

A duty equal in amount to the duty payable on a quarter of barley.

If the produce of, and imported from, any British possession in North America, or elsewhere out of Europe:—

Wheat.

Whenever the average price of wheat, made up and published in the manner required by law, shall be, for every quarter,

Under 55s. the duty shall be, for every quarter	5s.
55s. and under 56s.	4
56 . . 57	3
57 . . 58	2
58 and upwards	1

Barley.

Whenever the average price of barley, made up and published in the manner required by law, shall be, for every quarter,

Under 28s. the duty shall be, for every quarter	2s.	6d.
28s. and under 29s.	2	0
29 . . 30	1	6
30 . . 31	1	0
31 and upwards	0	6

Oats.

Whenever the average price of oats, made up and published in the manner required by law, shall be, for every quarter,

Under 22s. the duty shall be, for every quarter	2s.	0d.
22s. and under 23s.	1	6
33s. and upwards	0	6

Rye, Pease, and Beans.

Whenever the average price of rye, or of pease, or of beans, made up and published in the manner required by law, shall be, for every quarter,

Under 30s. the duty shall be, for every quarter	3s.	0d.
30s. and under 31s.	2	6
31 . . 32	2	0
32 . . 33	1	6
33 . . 34	1	0
34 and upwards	0	6

Wheat Meal and Flour.

For every barrel, being one hundred and ninety-six pounds;

A duty equal in amount to the duty payable on thirty-eight and a half gallons of wheat.

Oatmeal.

For every quantity of one hundred and eighty-one pounds and a half;

A duty equal in amount to the duty payable on a quarter of oats.

Maize or Indian Corn, Buck Wheat, Bear, or Bigg.

For every quarter;

A duty equal in amount to the duty payable on a quarter of barley."

2. "That it is expedient to amend the laws relating to the mode of taking and determining the average prices of corn."

Mr. *E. Buller* rose to move an amendment. It was from a feeling that this measure could give no satisfaction that he overcame his reluctance to protract the debate. He wished to preserve Ministers from the consequences, and the country from the mischiefs of this ruinous measure. Were the question at issue solely between himself and the right hon. Baronet, or himself and the hon. Members for Dorsetshire and East Kent, it would be very considerably narrowed. It might be recollected that, on a former occasion, he ventured to say that he thought there were terms in which a compromise might be come to. He ventured to say that the principal part of the compromise ought to be protection to the agricultural interest up to the point where it was expedient that the interest of the consumer should be attended to. The right hon. Baronet, in his reply, fully admitted that. He said it was perfectly right to consult the interest of the agriculturist up to a certain point, and beyond that, it was the duty of the House to look mainly at the interest of the consumer. The right hon. Gentleman went further, he said he was satisfied that if the agricultural interest was protected at 60*s*., then it was their duty to look only to the consumer. The right hon. Gentleman had proposed his scale, which was to give protection to the agricultural interest up to 60*s*.; he proposed his scale, which was also to give protection to the agricultural interest up to 64*s*. The first question at issue was, the degree of protection which the right hon. Baronet himself held the agricultural interest to be justly entitled to; the second was, whether his (Mr. E. Buller's) scale did not afford adequate protection. If it did, and if it were at the same time better for the consumer, the right hon. Baronet was bound to accept it. The great question at issue was this,—whether, having arrived at 66*s.*, with a duty of 6*s.*, the duty ought to be gradually remitted; or whether it ought, under all the circumstances, to be permanently maintained. The question between himself and the hon. Members for Dorsetshire and East Kent, was a narrower question. They said that a fixed duty was the best mode of protection, provided it could be maintained. Having undertaken to bring forward a scale, and place it in contrast with the right hon. Baronet's, he felt it his duty to enter more fully into the question—to point out the defects of the scale of the right hon. Gentleman, and having so done, he should proceed to show that his own scale gave adequate protection to the farmer, and was infinitely better for the consumer. The great difference between the two scales was, that the right hon. Baronet proposed gradually to lower the duty as the price of corn rose to 73*s.*, whereas, he proposed only to lower the duty till the price reached 64*s.*, and then to retain a duty of 6*s.* The right hon Baronet fully admitted all the mischiefs of the present law. He admitted that it had acted with undue severity on the consumers. He admitted that it held out a sufficient inducement under almost all circumstances to the holders of corn in bond to keep it from the market; but the right hon. Baronet said that in the plan which he now proposed he had reduced the inducement to withhold corn—that his new proposal would not have the injurious effects of the old law. He took issue with the right hon. Gentleman. He told him that, inasmuch as he had left the maximum of price and the minimum of duty precisely where it was, he had given no effectual relief to the consumer when prices were high—that it would be found that the law, as at present, would naturally force up corn to the maximum price of 73*s.*, and a minimum duty of 1*s.* The right hon. Baronet said that he had reduced the temptation to withhold corn in bond from the market, in which he did not concur. Comparing the existing scale with the plan proposed by the right hon. Baronet, he found that by the proposed scale, when corn was at 73*s.* there was a duty of 1*s.*, and it held out an inducement to the holder of corn in bond when the price was 64*s.*, to retain it there, and speculate for a high price, by which, he would obtain an advance of 1*s.* upon each quarter of grain, and, if the price reached 73*s.*, 8*s.* per quarter, in the duty. On the other hand, there was the possibility of a loss by the fall of price and the rise of the duty of 1*s.* upon each quarter of corn. The measure of the right hon. Baronet was in fact the same in principle as the existing measure, but the profit or loss to the corn dealer consequent upon a rise or fall in price was more gradual; but still a prudent man would withhold corn in the one case as the other. The result, as all might perceive, was that so far from corn flowing freely into the market when the price was at 64*s.* or 66*s.*, it was retained in bond in order to obtain the higher price and escape the duty. In 1841 the price of corn, early in September, was 72*s.* 8*d.*, and the duty 2*s.* 8*d.*, and there was at that time in bond no less than 1,900,000 quarters of wheat ready to come into the market. Of that quantity only 28,000 quarters were brought in at the duty of 2*s.* 8*d.*, and the great bulk was retained until the price rose and the duty fell, and the whole of the remainder was brought in at the duty of 1*s.* Again in 1838, the average price on the 4th September, was 72*s.* 11*d.*, and there was then in bond and ready to be brought into the market 1,200,000 quarters. Of that quantity again, 28,000 quarters were brought in at the duty of 2*s.* 8*d.*, while upwards of 1,100,000 quarters were retained till the duty fell to 1*s.* In 1831 the same results occurred with a smaller quantity in bond. In February of that year there were 200,000 quarters in bond, and the price was 72*s.* 8*d.*; 1,000 quarters only were introduced at the 2*s.* 8*d.* duty, while 195,000 were brought in when the price rose to the highest point and the duty fell to 1*s.* In 1828, in the first week of November, the duty was 2*s.* 8*d.*, the price being 72*s.* 8*d.*, and at that time there was between 400,000 and 500,000 quarters in bond. Of that quantity only 1000 quarters were brought in at the duty of 2*s.* 8*d.*—it was retained in bond till the duty fell to 1*s.* when the whole of the remainder was freed. Now, what he ventured to assert from these results was, that whenever the price rose to a certain amount in this country it clearly indicated that a supply of foreign corn was necessary, and if that supply was withheld corn would necessarily reach the maximum price. He would venture further to assert that 66*s.* was the price which indicated the necessity for that foreign supply, and which would most certainly bring up the price of corn in the English markets to the maximum. He believed there was scarcely an instance on record in which, when the price had risen to 66*s*. it had not eventually reached the maximum point [" *Hear, hear.*"] He had, unfortunately for his sins, been guilty of the offence of putting a notice of an amended scale upon the books, and he trusted he might be allowed to explain his motives for so doing to the House. In 1828, on the 30th October, the price of corn was 66*s*. and 67*s*., and on the 27th of November it had reached 75*s*. In 1829, on the 9th of April, the price was 66*s*. 3*d*., and in September it was 72*s*. 11*d*. And that certainly was an instance in which it did not quite reach the maximum point. In 1830, on the 10th of December the price was 65*s*. 11*d*., and on the 3d March, 1831, it was 73*s*. 2*d*. He would pass over the years in which there was no importation of foreign corn. In 1838, on the 19th July, the price was 66*s*. 4*d*., and on the 13th September, it was 73*s*. In 1839, on the 13th October it was 66*s*., and on the 13th December it was 73*s*. In 1839, on the 26th December it was 66*s*. 5*d*., and on the 3d September 1840, following, it was 72*s*. 3*d*., being the second and only other exception to the general rule. In 1841, the price in July was 66*s*. 3*d*., and on the 12th August it was 74*s*. 7*d*. Now, if that view were a correct one, and that it was all but certain that the inducement to withhold corn at 66*s*. was so great as he had shown, the scale of the right hon. Baronet would act in the very same way. He maintained that the result of the scale proposed by the right hon. Baronet, would be, as was the case with the present scale, to retain corn in bond until the price was forced up to 73*s*. It was true the inducements held out by the scale of the right hon. Baronet were not quite so strong as those under the existing scale, but still they were sufficient to produce similar results. The only way in which the sliding scale could be retained without producing that result was to lower the maximum point of price, and by that means relieve the consumer from the pressure under which he at present laboured. It was said by the right hon. Baronet that there were four locks on the door that kept the corn in bond, and the key which opened the door was the maximum price and the minimum duty. The right hon. Gentleman said he had removed two of the locks, by which means the door would be opened more easily, and more frequently; but he (Mr. Buller) would tell him that the two locks he left behind were sufficiently strong to keep the property secure, unless he applied the master key of lowering of the duty. It was for the reasons he had stated, that he objected to the scale proposed by the right hon. Baronet—the material difference between his plan and that of the right hon. Baronet was, that whereas the right hon. Baronet made a rest at 66*s*. and retained the sliding scale up to 69*s*.—not, as he said, for the benefit of the grower or the producer, but solely and entirely for the benefit of the consumer—that being so, he (Mr. Buller) took a different view of the matter, and proposed that at 64*s*. there should be a fixed duty of 6*s*., which would give the people of this country, when corn had reached that price, the absolute advantage of a free-trade in corn. 64*s*. was the highest price the farmer obtained when this country was supplied by the home growth. He would now show what would have been the effect of the right hon. Baronet's scale had it been in operation in 1841, and he would next show what would have been the effect of his own scale. During the whole of the early part of that year the prices rose gradually and steadily, and if the view which he took of this subject were correct, the certainty of obtaining a rise in price and a reduction in duty would have been sufficient, under the right hon. Baronet's scale as well as under the present, to keep up the whole of the corn till the price rose to 73*s*. and the duty fell to 1*s*. He would show the effect of his own scale. In July there were in bond in this country 558,000 quarters of corn; the price at that time was 61*s*., and the whole of that might have been purchased at Dantzic—the price at which port he would take to be the ruling price of the Baltic—at 40*s*. Adding 10*s*. for the cost of importation, and 6*s*. for duty, the whole of it might have been sold in this country at a profit at 56*s*. a quarter. But it all remained in bond. In August there were 800,000 quarters in bond, which might have been sold at some profit at prices varying from 60*s*. 6*d*. to 66*s*., paying a duty of 240,000*l*. But none of this was sold till the prices rose to 76*s*., and the duty fell so low, that the entire duty then paid was only 40,000*l*. In September there were 1,300,000 quarters in bond, which might have been profitably sold at 71*s*., and would then have paid a gross duty of 380,000*l*.; but it was kept up till the price rose in the country to 77*s*. and in London to 80*s*., and the duty fell, so that the entire amount paid was

65,000*l.* In July, when the price was 64*s.*, if his scale had been in operation, the markets would have been relieved, instead of suffering from such an increased rise in prices, and the public generally would have been benefited. He could not believe, with Mr. Hubbard, that the country would be ever again in the same situation in which it was in 1817. The hon. Member concluded with moving the following scale as an amendment, to leave out the words—

52*s.* and under	53*s.*	18*s.*
53*s.* ..	54*s.*	17*s.*
*54*s.* ..	55*s.*	16*s.*

Sir *R. Peel* thought that the proposition of the hon. Gentleman's resembled his own, so far as it was said to please nobody, as he conjectured by the difficulty which the hon. Gentleman had in obtaining a seconder. He trusted that the hon. Gentleman would not attribute to any feeling of personal disrespect his intention to decline entering into a discussion on the present occasion. It was desirable to have an end to these discussions. If they were to have a perpetual renewal of these debates, though he might travel over the ground even at a canter, he could produce no effect but that which the hon. Member had deprecated in his own person—that of wearying the House. The hon. Gentleman proposed a duty of 20*s.* when wheat was below 50*s.*, and a duty of 6*s.* when wheat was 64*s.* and upwards. The hon. Gentleman's scale differed slightly from his. At 66*s.* he proposed a duty of 6*s.*; at 64*s.* the hon. Gentleman proposed the same rate of duty, but the hon. Gentleman's 6*s.* duty was at that point to be permanently fixed, and therefore at certain prices it would be higher than his. He thought they had sufficiently discussed these preliminary questions, to render it unnecessary to say any thing upon them at this period of these debates. He must remind the hon. Gentleman that had the noble Lord the Member for the City of London been in his place he would not have agreed with the hon. Gentleman, for that noble Lord said, in reference to a fixed duty of 8*s.*, that it would be necessary to provide by law for its cessation under certain circumstances. He did not think that he could be charged with having shrunk from a discussion during these debates, but, considering that it was for the public advantage that there should be a limit to them, that they had had nine nights' debate already, and that at other stages of the measure there would be ample opportunity afforded for discussing it, he trusted that the House would excuse him if he declined entering now into the discussion to which the hon. Gentleman seemed to invite him.

Mr. *E. Buller* said, he was surprised and disappointed to find that the compromise which he offered, and which he had been led to suppose would be cheerfully accepted, was now, on the contrary, contemptuously rejected.

Sir *R. Peel* disclaimed having said a word which would at all justify the hon. Member in supposing that if he brought forward any scheme in the way of a compromise, it would be at once cheerfully accepted by him. Having succeeded in carrying through the committee every proposition embodied in his resolutions, if the hon. Gentleman believed that any alteration of his scale would be at once accepted by him, the hon. Gentleman was more credulous than, from what he knew of the hon. Gentleman's character and conduct, he should have been led to believe.

Mr. *Ward* said, that as a compromise, the proposition of the hon. Member for Staffordshire, would be quite as unacceptable to many hon. Gentlemen on the Opposition side of the House as it appeared to be to the right hon. Baronet, because it contained at one end a duty which amounted to a prohibition, and, at the other, a fixed duty of 6*s.*, to both of which they were opposed.

Amendment withdrawn, resolution again put.

Mr. *Hastie* would not detain the House with any long statements. He would only remark upon some of the effects of the present sliding scale, which he believed to be most injurious to the country, and then proceed to propose the amendment of which

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* The following is the scale which Mr. Buller meant to have substituted, had he succeeded.

Under 51*s.*		Duty 20*s.*
51*s.* and under	52	19
52 ..	53	18
53 ..	54	17
54 ..	55	16
55 ..	56	15
56 ..	57	14
57 ..	58	13
58 ..	59	12
59 ..	60	11
60 ..	61	10
61 ..	62	9
62 ..	63	8
63 ..	64	7
64 and upwards		6

he had given notice. By the scale proposed by the right hon. Baronet opposite a prohibitory duty would exist when the price of wheat amounted to 56*s*. Now, the consequence of this prohibitory duty would be, that in years of comparative plenty, such as 1834-5-6, when the average price of corn ranged at about 44*s*., great quantities of grain would accumulate in the continental ports, as well as in bond in this country. A sudden demand in consequence of a bad harvest arises, and will necessarily cause an immense circulation of bills upon the continent, for the purchase of the wheat in store, and the exchanges would thus be turned against the country. The Bank would at once feel the effects of this state of things in the drain of gold which would follow. The monetary and commercial relations of the country would thereby be deranged, and the interests of the manufacturer and the merchant seriously injured. This was the effect of prohibitory duties of the present law, and will be the same under the one proposed. But did the farmer benefit by them? From the derangement of the currency, the merchant and the manufacturer's trade was paralysed, workmen thrown out of employment, and the wages of those retained lowered; in these circumstances was it likely that, with reduced means, people could afford to buy the quantity of food they otherwise would consume? He had no hesitation in saying that consequences such as he had described would probably be felt in the present year from the want of consumption, and the quantity of wheat imported. The wheat market was then dull, and prices were falling, on account of the immense quantity of wheat imported in consequence of the jerks of the present sliding scale. Having thus alluded to some of the effects of the sliding scale, he would proceed to demonstrate how he believed the measure he was about to propose would operate in curing them. Supposing that 1,000,000 quarters of wheat were allowed to be annually imported at a duty of 1*s*., he did not believe that the consequent reduction of price would injuriously affect the interests of the farmer, but it would have the excellent consequence of forming a steady trade with corn-growing nations to the amount in value of the quantity of corn regularly imported. And not only would these good effects as regarded extension of trade follow, but the imported corn, being of the best quality, would be mixed with the second class of English wheat, and thus give it a currency and price, which, in bad seasons, it would not otherwise obtain. He would allude to the effect his motion, if agreed to, would produce in Ireland. It was well known that in that country there were very few seasons when the quality of corn grown was such that the grain could be used by itself, and without mixture with corn of a superior quality. Now, under the provisions of his proposition, corn could be at once brought to Ireland in order to improve the quality of the native grown wheat. But in years such as 1835, when corn was comparatively low-priced, the land-owner might say that the introduction of the proposed quantity of a million of quarters of corn would lower the price so far as to prove most injurious to the home grower. He, however, thought that such would not be the case, for under such regulations as he was about to propose, the prices of corn would be such that they could export large quantities to the colonies, and even supply the Brazils. Thus the surplus quantity of grain would be got rid of in a way which would employ both the capital and the shipping belonging to the country. Having stated some of the effects which he believed his proposition would produce, he could not help saying, with regard to the sliding scale, that he believed that if the original contrivers of that measure had laid their heads together to invent a mode whereby the farmer should have the greatest amount of nominal, without any real protection, they would not have contrived a better. And if at the same time they had studied how best to contrive it, so as periodically to derange the currency and paralyse the commerce and manufactures of the country, it is impossible they could have devised a plan better calculated to produce those evils, and which must ever attend any sliding scale of duties which has in it, under any circumstance of price, a prohibitory duty. He would detain the House no longer, but proceed at once to move the addition of the following words to the end of the resolution:—

> "And that in each year, and before the scale of duties comes into operation, the following quantities of grain shall be admitted for home consumption at a duty of 1*s*. the quarter, viz. 1,000,000 quarters of wheat, 250,000 quarters of barley, and 250,000 quarters of oats."

Sir *Robert Peel* said, that he hoped that he had not said anything which would lead the hon. Gentleman opposite to believe that he would accede to his proposal. He hoped that the hon. Gentleman was not labouring under the delusion which appeared to have possessed the last hon. Member who had spoken from his side of the House. Of all the schemes which had been submitted to the House, that of the hon. Member appeared to him to be the most extravagant. The proposition of that hon. Gentleman was, that a certain given quantity of wheat, of oats, and of barley, should be admitted at the nominal duty of 1*s.* in every year. This quantity was to be admitted regularly, no matter what the necessities of the country might be, no matter what the prices of corn might be—1,000,000 quarters of wheat, 250,000 quarters of barley, and 250,000 quarters of oats were to be regularly admitted during each year. It would of course be necessary to define the exact limits of the year. Take it from the 1st of January to the 1st of January, suppose it to be limited by these periods—then suppose that on the 2nd of January 2,000,000 of quarters were in bond—the holders of 1,000,000 quarters of this quantity would be entitled to introduce it at the duty of 1*s.* per quarter, what a scramble there would be among the holders. Suppose 2,000,000 of quarters were to be imported, one half of which was to be imported almost duty free, who was to decide between the rival holders?

Mr. *Hastie*: The point would be settled by the order of the arrivals of the importing vessels.

Sir *Robert Peel*: Supposing corn to be at the time of the introduction of the duty free quantity about 56*s.* in price, importers would be entitled to introduce it upon paying a duty of 16*s.* Suddenly, without any peculiar necessity or demand, 1,000,000 of quarters would be poured in, prices would immediately fall, and duties would be raised as regarded the holders of the remaining stock in bond. The price would fall to 50*s.*, the duty would rise to 20*s.*, and how the hon. Member could propose a measure having such effects as a remedy for the evils of the sliding scale he could not understand. Then the measure of the hon. Gentleman appeared to be intended to facilitate intercourse with the United States of America. [Mr. *Hastie*: "It will do so effectually."] "He could not understand how." The right hon. Baronet proceeded: If 1,000,000 of quarters of corn were every year to be introduced, say on the 2nd of January, the ports of Rotterdam and Antwerp would have a great advantage over the ports of America, because the quantity to be admitted was limited, and as every party would be desirous of having his grain entered as soon as possible after the 1st of January, it was obvious that the result would be a great disadvantage to the more distant corn growing countries. His great objection to the proposition was, that in all years corn was to be regularly thrown in upon the market free of duty. Such a proposal he thought was vicious in its very nature. When the price of wheat was 50*s.* per quarter, 1,000,000 quarters were to be poured in, when it was 70*s.* per quarter, no additional quantity was to be introduced. The same degree of relief was to be given in every year, without reference to public necessities, and, after the stated quantity of grain was introduced, the sliding scale was proposed to be left in full operation for the remainder of the year. He could not understand in what manner the proposed measure was to affect the stability or the extension of trade. It appeared to him that it would aggravate the evils of the present system, instead of producing a tendency to mitigate their effects; and if relief were to depend on the accidental length of time in which corn might happen to have been kept in bond, a very great advantage would be given to the countries along the shores of the Baltic over America. Under these circumstances he felt it to be his duty not to accede to the proposition of the hon. Member.

Mr. *Hastie* rose to explain the mode or introduction which he intended should be pursued, and which he believed the right hon. Baronet did not clearly comprehend. Vessels with wheat would not all arrive at once, but in succession, and his plan was, that they should take precedence in the order of the arrival, until the required quantity of grain was made up.

Sir *Robert Peel* said, that this would still be giving a great advantage to the nearer over the distant ports.

Mr. *Hastie* replied, that the distant ports would be aware of the law, and would ship their cargoes so as to be in good time for the period of free admission. If the cargoes did not arrive until the million of quarters had been filled up, the corn must be kept in bond until the next year. He feared that, from want of practice in addressing the House, he had not made his plan sufficiently intelligible.

Motion negatived.

Resolution agreed to.

Second resolution agreed to, and bill ordered to be brought in.

VAN DIEMEN'S LAND.] On the order of the day for the third reading of the Van Diemen's Land Bill having been read,

Mr. *Murphy* begged to call the attention of the House to a circumstance connected with the measure before the House, of which he had been informed by a constituent. The gentleman alluded to had carried on business in Van Diemen's Land as a distiller before a proclamation of Sir G. Arthur was issued, which levied certain duties upon the article which he manufactured, and had ruined his business. It was, however, since understood, that these duties were laid on by a party having no authority to levy them or to levy any such duties. His constituent in consequence had raised an action against Sir G. Arthur for damages, and he (Mr. Murphy) wished to know whether it were the intention of Government that the bill which they were now to introduce, upon subjects connected with that to which he was alluding, would contain a clause having a retrospective effect in legalising the proceedings of the governor of the colony, and thus cutting off the legal means of redress open to his constituent, for what at the time of its exaction was undoubtedly an unauthorised exaction. He thought it hard that the Governor of Van Diemen's Land should be indemnified, while the gentleman for whom he asked the question was left without any such relief. He trusted, however, that the bill in question would contain a clause giving the required compensation.

Lord *Stanley* thought that the person alluded to by the hon. Gentleman had no claim to object to the passing of the bill which Government had introduced. He had no doubt but that that person was a respectable individual; but the hon. Gentleman opposite had not had the opportunity of seeing the voluminous correspondence in which he had been engaged with reference to the matter, and had, therefore, no such complete knowledge of the case as he had. The claim of this person, Mr. Hackett, was that which led to the discovery of the flaw in the power of the governor to levy the taxes alluded to. Mr. Hackett had received compensation, but was not satisfied with the amount; and it was on that question that he had entered into the voluminous correspondence referred to. The bill introduced by Government was founded on the following circumstances: It appeared that, previous to the year 1829, the duties were levied in Van Diemen's Land by proclamation. In 1829, an act was passed for levying the duties by order of the Governor and Council. Up to 1834 all the duties continued to be levied, without considering the illegality of the proceeding, on proclamation by the governor, instead of by the Governor and Council. In 1834, the irregularity was discovered, and an act of the Governor and Council passed to give validity to duties claimed under the irregular order. Doubts were, however, thrown upon the power of the council of Van Diemen's Land to remedy the irregularities under which the duties had been collected from 1829 to 1834; and it was under these circumstances that Parliament was called upon to interfere and legalise the proceedings of the council of Van Diemen's Land.

Mr. *Murphy* was quite satisfied with the noble Lord's explanation, and rejoiced that he should have elicited so clear a statement on the part of the Government.

Mr. *Wakley*: If the fact was that no proceedings had been instituted of late years, he did not see why indemnity should be granted. It may have been that a higher amount of duties was levied than the officers were justified in imposing, and if that were so, it was hard that the parties resisting them should be refused costs.

Lord *Stanley*: There was no doubt about what occurred since 1834. This measure was merely to give validity to acts previous to that year.

Bill read a third time.

MARRIAGES (IRELAND.)] On the order of the day being read for the third reading of the Marriages (Ireland) Bill,

Mr. *Murphy* said, that though he understood the Solicitor-general for Ireland to promise that he would frame a clause for the purpose of fixing the burden of the supporting the children by a first marriage, which was declared illegal, on the man, who had married a second time, he found no such clause in the bill as it was now submitted.

Mr. Sergeant *Jackson*: Though the case stated by the hon. and learned Gentleman was a very strong one, he had given no other promise with regard to it than that he should take it into consideration. It was not considered expedient to frame a clause to meet the case complained of—first, because he believed it was a solitary one; and next, because it would not be just that the person alluded to should be dealt with, as it was suggested he should be, without being heard.

Bill read a third time.

On the question that it do pass,

Mr. *Sharman Crawford* was desirous of calling the attention of the House to the injudicious limitation of the first clause. Relief, it appeared, was only intended to be given in cases in which marriages had been celebrated by Presbyterian ministers between members of their own congregations and of the Established Church. Now it had been understood in Ireland for years, that all marriages celebrated by Presbyterian ministers were legal, and many instances had occurred in which two members of the Established Church had been married by a Presbyterian minister. Now it was very hard that persons so circumstanced should be precluded from relief. It was cruel to illegitimatise families, merely in consequence of such a mistake on the part of their parents. Relief by such a bill as this ought not to be stinted, but it should be extended to all cases in which parties had married under a misapprehension of the law. He had understood that there were many cases in Ireland of marriages celebrated by Presbyterian ministers between members of their own congregation and members of the other sects; he wished to know from the learned Gentleman opposite, in what situation those parties were placed by the decision of the Irish Judges, and whether such marriages were valid in law? He thought that all marriages solemnised by a Presbyterian clergyman should be made valid. He would, therefore, move that all the words in the first clause, between the word "teachers," in the 11th line, to the word "shall," in the 25th, be omitted.

Mr. *F. Maule* hoped that the hon. Gentleman would withdraw his motion, as he was sure his object would be answered by an assurance from the Government that they would take it into consideration. He must, however, enter his protest against the clause for legitimatising the offspring of the second marriage, and leaving the father quite free, even as to the support of the first. He thought it was not at all certain but that the children of the first marriage would dispute the matter at law after this bill was brought in, and it was by no means certain whether the decision of the Irish judges would be adhered to.

Mr. *Shaw* observed, that in the first place it was always considered that a Presbyterian clergyman marrying persons belonging to the Church of England did that which was not considered quite lawful. And, in the next place, it was clear that though this bill provided for an existing defect, it did not shut out the parties alluded to by the right hon. Gentleman from trying the question before a legal tribunal.

Sir *R. Peel* trusted that the right hon. Gentleman would not press his motion to a division. The object of this bill was merely to provide for an existing evil, which might lead to others if remedied in too hasty and inconsiderate a manner. Looking at the state of the marriage law, it did not present much ground for satisfaction. He was aware of the difficulties of assimilating the law in the three countries, and particularly of those which impeded any change in Scotland; but a question which affected the peace and domestic happiness of families was in a most unsatisfactory condition. He was sure, too, that the general marriage law of Ireland could not be touched without inquiry and without great caution. It was the intention of her Majesty's Government to look into the subject, which was one the House of Lords might apply themselves to with the greatest advantage. It would be impossible, however, even for that House, reckoning as it did amongst its members the highest legal authorities, to touch this question without consulting the feelings of all classes of the people.

Mr. *Wakley*, while he hoped that his hon. Friend would withdraw the present amendment, did not see why, if any change was requisite, that House could not make the necessary inquiry and alterations with as much advantage as the House of Lords.

Lord *Eliot* observed, that there existed the greatest anxiety for the passing of this bill. He had looked through the petitions, and he did not find a single allusion to such a case as that referred to by the amendment of the hon. Gentleman.

Sir *R. Peel* wished to qualify what he had said, by a single observation—and that was, that if they extended the provisions of this law to a single other case than the obvious evil which it was meant to remedy, they might throw doubts on the validity of several marriages which were now undisputed.

Mr. *Litton* bore testimony to the fact, that no case such as that alluded to had occurred within the knowledge of the bar of Ireland.

Amendment withdrawn. Bill passed.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, *March* 3, 1842.

MINUTES.] BILLS. *Public.*—1^{a}. Apprentices Regulation; Van Diemen's Land.

Private.—2^{a}. Ludlow Corporation and Charity Estate.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Lord Strafford, from Ballykelly, and other places, Lord Campbell, from Congregations of Dromore, and other places, the Earl of Enniskillen, from Congregations of Enniskillen, and other places, and Lord Brougham, from Hillsborough, for Legalizing certain Marriages by Presbyterian Clergymen; one of the Petitions asking for a General System of Registration of Births, Marriages, and Deaths.—By the Earl of Enniskillen, from Templecarn, and other places, for the Encouragement of Schools in connection with the Church Education Society (Ireland).—By the Earl of Minto, from Hawick, and Tewkesbury, and Lord Brougham, from South Shields, Pontefract, and Newport, for the Repeal of the Corn-laws.—From Saffron Walden, against the proposed Scale of Duties on Corn.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, *March* 3, 1842.

MINUTES.] BILLS. *Public.*—1^{o}. Southwark Improvement (No. 2); Rivers (Ireland).

Private.—1^{o}. Kington Road; Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal; Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal (Extension); Windsor Bridge; Castlerigg and Derwentwater Inclosure.

Withdrawn.—Nottingham Gas (No. 2).

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Mr. Villiers, from Leeds, Sheffield, and other places, Mr. Ricardo, from several Parishes of London, Mr. Fox Maule, from Montrose, and other places, Mr. Blewitt, from Newport, and other places, and Mr. Gore Langton, from places in Somersetshire, for the Repeal of the Corn-laws.—By Mr. G. Banks, from Poole, in favour of the Ministerial Measure; and Mr. Gore Langton, from Manshead, against that Measure.—By an hon. Member, from William Lane, to Void Leases should the Corn Importation Bill pass.—By Dr. Stock, from Millers of Armagh, and other places, and Mr. Gregory, from Millers of Dublin, for Encouragement to Import Wheat in preference to Flour.—By an hon. Member, from Joseph Jenkins, for Continuing the present Corn-law Inspectors.—By Sir R. Inglis, from Bath, for Protection to the Church, and against the Abolition of Church-rates.—By an hon. Member, from Dr. Davidson, for an Alteration of the Poor-law.—By Sir R. Inglis, from Clergy of Oxford, to Amend the Law relating to Rating Tithes.—By Major Bryant, and other hon. Members, from Congregations of Presbyterians in Carsland, Cookstown, and other places, for Legalizing certain Marriages by Dissenting Clergymen.—From Sligo, and other places, for Repeal of the Union (Ireland).

QUANTITY OF CORN PRODUCED.] Mr. *Rennie* begged to ask the right hon. Baronet opposite whether it were the intention of Government, in regulating the supply of corn, to establish some means of ascertaining as correctly as possible the number of acres sown with grain every year in the United Kingdom, specifying the different kinds of grain sown, and the quantity produced, so that when the right hon. Baronet's measure came into operation, it might be competent in persons to form an estimate as to whether, with an average crop, there would be sufficient for the consumption of the United Kingdom.

Sir *R. Peel* said, the House was aware that, in connection with the Board of Trade, there was a department of which the business was, to obtain statistical information on the trade and exports of the United Kingdom; and to this department there had recently been added another, for the purpose of obtaining statistical information in reference to agriculture; but the object was strictly to collect facts, and not estimates; and he thought it would be very unwise on the part of Government to sanction any publication of this information, for the purpose of enabling individuals to form estimates one way or the other, as to whether there was, or was not, a sufficient supply of corn. This was a matter which would be much better left to the natural operation of commerce. The interference of Government, he conceived, in such a matter, was altogether to be deprecated.

INDIA AND THE MAURITIUS—EMIGRATION.] Mr. *Hogg* begged to put a question to his hon. Friend, the Secretary for the Board of Control. There had been laid before the House a despatch from the Secretary for the Colonies, addressed to the commissioners for regulating the affairs of India, transmitting a copy of an Order of her Majesty in Council regulating the introduction of labourers from India into the Mauritius; also a copy of a despatch containing the opinion of her Majesty's Ministers, regarding the supply of free labour from India to the Mauritius, and requesting that the despatch and enclosure should be transmitted to the Governor-general of India. His question was, whether the President of the Board of Control, before authorising the transmission of those documents, would consider it his duty to lay on the Table a copy of a despatch from the Court of Directors, containing their views of the subject, and the instructions which they might issue on the subject to the local Government.

Mr. *B. Baring* said, the object of the Board of Control, and he believed also the wish of the Court of Directors, was, to give every possible facility to the course taken on this subject. He had no objection to lay the papers to which his hon. Friend referred on the Table.

FLOGGING IN PRISONS.] Mr. *T. Duncombe* begged to put a question to the right hon. Baronet, the Secretary for the Home Department, relative to a statement of his upon a former evening, that out of 1,207 persons flogged in prisons, the number of adults was only seventy. He (Mr. Duncombe) found, on referring to the official returns, that the number of adults was 418, leaving 789 juvenile offenders. He wished to know whether his statement were correct.

Sir *James Graham* said, it was true, that in 1841 there were 418 persons subjected to corporal punishment, but 348 were so punished according to sentences of courts of justice, and seventy received punishment for breach of prison discipline, either under sentence of magistrate, or by the act of the gaoler, confirmed by the magistrate. What he wished to convey was, that out of 70,000 persons confined only seventy, or one in a thousand, received corporal punishment for breaches of prison discipline.

LASCARS IN LONDON.] Mr. *B. Baring* said, in reference to a question put to him on a former evening by the hon. Member for Inverness, relative to a large number of Lascars wandering about London, that the Board of Control would draw the attention of the Court of Directors and the Board of Trade to the subject, in the hope that some remedy might be found for the sufferings of these poor people.

FORGERY OF EXCHEQUER BILLS.] The *Chancellor of the Exchequer*: I am glad that the courtesy of the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. French), and of my noble Friend (Viscount Mahon), has enabled me, by postponing their motions, to bring before the House a subject of very great public and individual importance; and that I am now at liberty to recur to the assistance of Parliament for a complete developement of transactions which have engaged a large portion of public attention, and which have been to all those concerned in the administration of the financial department of the country for some months past a source of unceasing labour and constant anxiety. Although the subject has been fully discussed by the public, although the Government have applied themselves to the complete developement of all its circumstances, yet there are parts of the transaction which cannot, in my view of it, be completely developed, without calling on Parliament for assistance. The object, therefore, which I have in view this evening, is to submit to this House the measure which it appears to me expedient that Parliament should adopt, in order that the whole circumstances of the case may be fully known to this House, to Parliament, and to the country. Under this view of my object, it is not my intention to enter into an examination of what may have been the defects of the system under which Exchequer-bills have been heretofore fabricated or issued, nor to discuss what changes it may be essential to make, either in the law which regulates that issue, or the regulations under which it has hitherto taken place. These circumstances will be proper subjects of future discussion—of discussion when there shall have been time allowed sufficiently to weigh well the recommendations which have been submitted to Government, by the report of the Commissioners—when time shall have been allowed those most conversant with the business of the Treasury and of the Exchequer, to consider what may be the most expedient course to pursue, for the improvement of the law, and for the prevention of fraud, as far as human means can prevent a repetition of crimes similar to those which have been recently committed. Before I explain to Parliament the nature of the measure which I shall propose to them to adopt, I may be permitted briefly to advert to the circumstances of the case and to the position in which we now stand. An extensive fraud—it is generally known to all whom I have the honour of addressing—has been committed, by means of forging public securities, to a considerable extent. That forgery was committed by a breach of confidence on the part of a public officer—by one of those gross violations of duty which, happily, are rare in the annals of this country, but which, in proportion as they are rare, create, when they do occur, a strong sensation and considerable alarm. The mode in which the fraud was committed was simply this:—An individual in the department, in whom was reposed the confidence of his superiors, he having been in the department for eight-and-twenty years, being connected with those who had distinguished themselves, both in the civil and military service of the country, an individual who had enjoyed the uninterrupted confidence of a series of auditors and Comptrollers-general—who had received the strongest testimonies as to his ability and honesty from Lord Grenville, Lord Auckland, and Sir John Newport, from the present Comptroller-general and others connected with the department—that individual presented the melancholy picture of a person violating the most sacred duties, abusing the powers he possessed to defraud the public, in whose service he had been so long employed, and whom he was under the strongest obligations to serve faithfully and with honour. The mode in which he accomplished the fraud was by possessing himself of papers which had been entrusted to him in his official capacity; and having so possessed himself of those papers, by taking them from the office in which he served, in order to forge the name of the noble Lord, whose signature Exchequer-bills were by law bound to bear. He then availed himself of these forged bills as negociable instruments; but, as this was a fraud which, if it had not been committed guardedly and with great precaution it would have admitted of easy detection, the course this individual pursued—assisted by agents whose crime, perhaps, did not equal, but certainly approached near to that of the principal in the transaction—was to give those Exchequer-bills so forged as deposits for loans of money, on condition that the very bills so deposited for loans should be returned to him on payment of the money, or on other Exchequer-bills being given in the room of those which had been originally deposited. Thus by constantly at each successive exchange of Exchequer-bills forging new bills, with a view to replace the forged bills already outstanding, he contrived effectually to prevent the presentation for exchange of the forged bills at the Exchequer-office, and equally to prevent their general circulation among the commercial community of the metropolis. Thus, he committed, in the first instance, a breach of every honourable obligation; and afterwards, by an artful concealment of the forged instruments issued, he succeeded in escaping the detection to which a different course would have certainly exposed him. On the 20th October last an individual called upon me at my office, and informed me that an offer had been made to him of Exchequer-bills in deposit for a loan of money, and he told me that the rate of interest offered to him upon the loan, was so disproportionate to the market rate of interest, that he suspected the bills must have been stolen, or that they were the property of some other individual. On that information being confidentially communicated to me, I felt it my duty to make immediate enquiry, and I lost no time in doing so. The result of that enquiry, in consequence of the information given to me on the 20th of October, was, that on the 25th of the same month the whole fraud was developed, and the individuals guilty of it taken into custody. Five days were sufficient between the first suspicion of the offence, and the apprehension of the offender, to bring to light a fraud which had been for so long a period in progress. Do not let the House suppose, that I mention this with a view to claim any credit to the Government, or praise for activity which it may have displayed on a particular occasion. Far from it. I mention it only to remind the House, that if among the many persons who must have had cognizance of this proceeding, there had been found one individual who would have given a public officer information of the offence committed (and it is a suspicious circumstance that there was not one among so many), the offence, instead of being concealed from April, 1836, to October, 1841, would at any intervening period have been effectually discovered. This is an important consideration for the House to bear in mind in the progress of the proceeding which I shall recommend. Upon the discovery of the offence the Government had but one course to pursue. The first thing was to bring to punishment the offender by whose agency the whole proceeding had taken place. The unhappy man made a partial confession of his guilt in the first instance. From that, means were found of getting hold also of the agent who was principally concerned in assisting him in this nefarious transaction. Application was made to the Government by both parties to be admitted to give information. Application was made very strongly on behalf of the principal, Smith, that he might receive a remission of punishment if he pleaded guilty, and gave information to the fullest extent to the

Government. Such an application it was impossible for the Government to accept. It was their duty to develop the whole nature of the transactions; to ascertain the minute facts; to learn how the crime was committed, and how it was so long concealed; but they could never reconcile it to their sense of public duty to permit him, but for whom no crime could have been committed, who was the chief criminal, to escape without punishment. Such being their view, his application was considered one to which no attention could be paid, and the answer was, that the course of law in its utmost rigour must take place. With respect to another individual, the Government did think it right to confirm the testimony which they had, by admitting him as Queen's evidence. I know, that on that account the Government were subjected to much obloquy, but when I call to mind the great importance of convicting the principal offender—when I bring to mind how essential it was to obtain, as far as possible, a complete knowledge of the full extent of the crime which was committed, I shall be prepared at any time, that it may be questioned in Parliament to defend the conduct of the Government on that occasion. But I do not believe, that any one who entertains a just sense of the situation in which the matter stood will be disposed to call in question the correctness of our conduct. It happened also, that the principal individual—his application for favourable consideration having been refused — himself pleaded guilty. But not, be it observed, until the other party was admitted as Queen's evidence. In consequence of that plea, which the Government have been accused of having procured, but to which they were not accessory in the slightest degree, it has been complained, that that full development of the transaction was prevented which the public was anxious should have taken place. But over that the Government, after placing the party on his trial had no control. Having convicted the principal offender, the next duty which devolved on the Government was to establish public credit, which was considerably shaken by the extent to which the forgeries had taken place. To effect this, no other means could be adopted than the difficult and laborious one of calling in every Exchequer bill in circulation, examining them separately in the office from which they had been issued, stamping them with a mark to denote their genuineness, and then re-issuing them to the public. This duty was performed, when the extent of it is considered, in a very few days. And here I should be guilty of the greatest injustice if I did not pay a tribute to the assiduity and zeal of the Comptroller of the Exchequer, who, being called upon to perform a duty in some degree foreign to the office which he held, devoted his whole time for a very considerable period to the personal superintendence of the necessary arrangements. To his exertions on that occasion the public were indebted for the short time which elapsed between the presentation of the bills at the Exchequer, and their re-issue to the public; and, therefore, to their not being exposed for a longer time to the inconvenience which must result from the withdrawal of so large a mass of public securities from circulation. Having provided for this emergency the Government proceeded to another task equally necessary, namely, to institute an inquiry as to what were the official regulations under which Exchequer bills were issued, and to ascertain what were the defects of those arrangements, with a view to recommend such alterations as might be necessary to prevent the occurrence of similar fraud in future. For that purpose they selected individuals, of whom I need not say that as they are distinguished for their ability, so they stand most high in character, as upright and honourable men—men neither likely on the one hand to be influenced by popular prejudice, nor on the other to pay deference to any wish which might be felt in any quarter to conceal whatever might have been amiss, or to keep it back from public observation. To these Gentlemen I cannot sufficiently express my obligations in having at great inconvenience to themselves, undertaken a public duty of so laborious and irksome a character, and having devoted to it so much of their time, I trust ultimately with so much benefit to the public. Now, Sir, I do not mean at the present moment to enter into the question to which their report gives rise. That report is before the House. A time will come when I shall have to submit to the House regulations necessary for hereafter settling the whole question arising upon that report, and then it will properly come under the consideration of Parliament. I may here however remark, as an answer to those who thought the Government desired concealment of what took place in the offices of the Exchequer and the Treasury, and who tax us with having admitted one of the parties as Queen's evidence and induced Smith to plead guilty, with a view to conceal facts, that if any Government had a design of concealing facts occurring in public offices, there could not be a stronger proof of the absence of such an intention than the selection of these Gentlemen to conduct the investigation, of which the results are already submitted to Parliament. Sir, I think the House will admit that the Government have acted with the vigour and promptitude which the case required. But there is something more required in this case, as it appears to me, than the mere examination of official rules, or the conviction of the offender who committed this crime. It must be obvious that, in order to the completion of the crime of which I have given the details to the House, two circumstances were essentially necessary—one was the want of caution, perhaps, on the part of a public department, a want of caution originating in a long series of years of immunity from abuse. For 150 years no offence whatever had been committed of a similar character, nor had anything occurred which could lead to the suspicion that Exchequer bills could be subject to forgery. But something more was necessary to the commission of such an offence than a breach of confidence on the part of an individual in office, or the want of strength in the official regulations by which that individual was bound. I say, and I speak advisedly when I say, that such an offence could not have been committed in the midst of the intelligent community which inhabits this metropolis without there being, I will not say connivance, but some knowledge of the transactions going on at the time which it was the duty of the individuals who possessed it to have communicated to the Government. Why, Sir, what was the result of the first detection of the offence? No sooner were proceedings taken against the individual Smith, than I received from various quarters details of suspicious circumstances, which had taken place in antecedent years. One gentleman had a loan offered to him of Exchequer bills, which he was led at once to reject, from the suspicious manner in which it was communicated, though he did not convey his suspicions to others. In other instances I was informed that a large number of persons were employed in the negotiation of Exchequer bills who were devoid of character and respect in the society in which they lived. With such facts, I say there are circumstances on the part of the public which require to be examined, that we may understand the real nature of this transaction—how the suspicion of a fraud committed by one individual could have been so long entertained amongst so large a number of persons, and so long have escaped detection. It is, therefore, with this view that I shall call upon Parliament to institute a specific inquiry—not to be conducted by a committee of this House, or by a mere commission appointed by the Crown, but by a commission appointed by Parliament to investigate the real nature of these several transactions, to see how business was transacted by those several persons who acted as instruments in the distribution of the forged bills, to know whether they were men of such unsuspicious characters that honest men might fairly have given them credit for fairly possessing the amount of money which they shewed in Exchequer bills, and whether the money advanced on the bills bore an interest beyond the market rate, or what would have been reasonable under similar circumstances, were the transaction an honest one. These, and a variety of other circumstances, require to be rigidly and strictly investigated, before the House can be called on to come to any final decision on the question; nay, before we can understand the nature of the case with which we have to deal. Sir, an inquiry of this kind appears to me to be required by the highest moral consideration. It is essential that the people of the country should know how public business is conducted which admits of such occurrences; because, if there be a probability that practices of this kind can be carried on to so great a length without exposure, then a different set of regulations may be necessary from what would be required if all persons were careful in examining proceedings in which they engaged. In addition to official rules, there must be the security of general care and caution on the part of the public: or at least, if not care and caution, a readiness to communicate with the Government whenever circumstances occur which raise doubts respecting the conduct of any department in the public administration. Sir, there is, perhaps, another circumstance to which I ought to advert, and which will no doubt be mentioned on the present occasion. It was pressed upon me from the first moment, and by some Gentlemen with great force—it has been urged upon me by the public press, and in various ways. I allude to the claims of parties holding forged bills, for payment of those bills. Now, those claims when brought before me I have met, as I conceive it my duty to meet, by a distinct refusal. I stated to the parties, what I have no hesitation in stating to the House, that to admit claims for payment in a case of this kind is to take from the public the greatest security against a repetition of such offences, and to do all in your power to render future villainy effective for its object. If, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, I once pronounced the opinion that a man, taking a forged public security, was, therefore, to have a remedy against the public, what could I do more effectually to remove all precaution—all ordinary care from individuals receiving such securities—or how could I more effectually encourage individuals in their efforts to seduce a public officer, than by holding out a security that the result of his fraud, however it might terminate, would be his obtaining compensation for the security which he had improperly obtained? Therefore, Sir, I have forborne to give the least encouragement to propositions of this kind; and I do most decidedly, if I may be permitted, advise the House and Parliament to weigh well all the considerations of this nature, before they are led away by any statements of individual hardship, or individual suffering, lightly to yield to claims of this nature. Sir, it appears to me, I confess, before the House can enter on a question of the sort, that they must satisfy themselves that there is some distinction to be drawn between the law as it applies to forgery on individuals and on the public. They must also make up their minds to this, that it is not expedient to give the holders of forged instruments a remedy against the individuals from whom they received them, and so on, tracing them from hand to hand up to the individual who committed the original fraud. I do not mean to say that there may not be particular circumstances in which you may not forego a strict adherence to that rule, but in any case I think you should strenuously resist giving any encouragement whatever until the whole nature of the transaction shall be so fully before you, that you are in a situation to form a correct judgment upon it. For, Sir, if it should appear that these crimes have been committed by means of putting confidence in suspicious individuals—nay, in individuals more than suspicious, whose conduct in previous transactions had given a taint to their proceedings in the society in which they lived—if it should further appear that there was a species of secrecy enjoined when these bills were deposited as security that was not usual—if it should appear that the interest demanded was greater than under similar circumstances would be demanded in fair and honourable transactions—if it should appear that when a bill escaped from what I shall call the imprisonment in which it was put, a premium was offered to recover back that particular bill, that it might not get into circulation—if there is a possibility that such facts should appear as the result of the inquiry which I propose to the House to adopt, then I think, until these points are made clear, that the House and the Government should most carefully abstain from holding out the slightest prospect of interposing to prevent the ordinary course of law on this subject. With these views, I shall conclude by proposing to Parliament that they should appoint a commission for the purpose of inquiring into the receipt, circulation, and possession of certain forged Exchequer-bills. The hon. Gentleman opposite (the Member for Monmouth) has given notice of an amendment on the motion which I am about to propose, for the purpose of referring the matter to a select committee. I presume the hon. Gentleman's object is, like my own, to attain the most thorough knowledge of all the details of those transactions. If, then, I prefer my own motion to that of the hon. Member for Monmouth, the House, I am sure, will give me credit for believing that it is not intended for the purpose of defeating any object which is applicable to such an inquiry, but because I believe that the course which I am about to pursue is the one most calculated to ascertain, in the clearest manner, every matter connected with this question, and of presenting it in a manner the most fit for Parliament to adjudicate upon. By appointing commissioners you will have the advantage of the witnesses being brought before them upon oath. You can place on that commission men of the highest legal character—persons not to be influenced by applications from their constituents, but who, being perfectly free and unembarrassed, can examine into the real circumstances of the case. They will have the fullest powers for doing that; at least I propose, in my bill, to give them the fullest powers to make the most searching inquiry into all points of the case to which I have alluded. I confidently trust, then, that their report will be such as to leave no point unexplained—no part unknown to Parliament and the country, and that the Parliament and the Government will be in a situation to judge what course it will be advisable to pursue, and the most conducive to prevent a recurrence of similar circumstances, as well as for the maintenance of the public credit. The right hon. Gentleman concluded by moving for leave to bring in a bill for the appointment of a commission, with power of examining and inquiring as to the receipt, circulation, and possession, of certain forged Exchequer-bills.

Mr. *Kemble* had been requested, before the commencement of the Session, by certain gentlemen, to present a petition on their behalf to the House. Having, however, found that there was a rule which, without the recommendation of Government, precluded him from doing so, he had waited until the right hon. Gentleman made his statement before he should refer to that petition. He must say, that with the greater part of what had been stated by the right hon. Gentleman he most fully concurred. There was, however, one part of the observations of the right hon. Gentleman with which he did not agree; and, but for this, he should not have risen. It was with reference to the imputations which the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had cast upon the holders of these Exchequer-bills. He would venture to say, on their behalf, that some of the holders of those Exchequer-bills would be found among the most respectable and honourable men that this great metropolis could produce; and he only hoped the House would suspend their opinion on the transaction under discussion till that full inquiry which the right hon. Gentleman proposed had taken place. He had been made acquainted with circumstances attending those transactions, but it would be unjust to the parties themselves to enter further into the discussion of them at present. He could only say, if the right hon. Gentleman gave the consent of the Government to having that petition to which he alluded presented, it would be seen that the course intended to be pursued by the right hon. Gentleman was just such a one as the holders of those bills would require. He was not at liberty exactly to read the prayer of the petition, but he might be allowed to read what was the conclusion of that petition, supposing that he were permitted to present it. From it the Government would see that the holders of the bills in question demanded nothing more than a strict and rigid inquiry into this affair—an inquiry which was due both to themselves and to the public at large. The petitioners went on to say, each for himself, that their conduct in the receipt of those Exchequer-bills, and the advances they had made on their security, had been an honest *bonâ fide* proceeding, perfectly regular, and in the ordinary course of business; and therefore they solicited from that honourable House, through such means as its wisdom might suggest, a most scrupulous and effective investigation into all the circumstances of the case, so far as they were concerned, and they were willing to state all they knew about it on oath, and to produce all books, papers, and writings, connected with it in their possession; for they made this appeal to the honourable House, confident that the result would fully satisfy the House that the conduct of the petitioners, in the receipt of such bills, had been honourable, regular, and unexceptionable in every respect. He confidently believed that the gentlemen who signed that petition had nothing to keep in the back ground. They desired and expected a rigid examination, such in fact as the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed. He would not now enter into details, as the House was not in possession of materials for discussion; he would content himself with merely remarking, that the speech of the right hon. Gentleman showed that an inquiry was demanded, not only for the sake of the public, but that it would be unjust to the holders of the bills if it were refused; considering, moreover, that those frauds had been committed by persons in the employment of the Government. He had now only to notice the amount of interest charged on those bills. It would appear that the interest charged by the lenders was no more than according to the money rate at the time the advance was made; and he would remind the House, that the great corporation of the Bank of England, four times a-year, advertised to lend money, for a limited period, at 5 per cent. on Exchequer-bills. The petitioners should not be blamed for doing what the Bank of England did; and if they in any instance had taken higher interest than 5 per cent., he would remind the House that they had done so under the sanction of the Legislature, which had relaxed the usury laws for the benefit of trade, and had legalised that which before was not lawful.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* was only anxious to say this, that when he alluded to persons, holders of the bills, who had acted fraudulently, he was alluding to cases that were present to his mind, and with respect to which he had information; but he never meant to allude to the whole body of the holders as being guilty of participating in the fraud. That was not his intention; and he should be very sorry if it went abroad that he had expressed an opinion of that nature. What he referred to were cases within his own knowledge.

Mr. *Leader* did not mean to detain the House, but he could not resist making one or two observations on what had fallen from the right hon. Gentleman, as well as the hon. Gentleman opposite. The Chancellor of the Exchequer almost seemed to forget, that there were two questions of carelessness here. Carelessness on the part of those who were holders of Exchequer-bills, and carelessness in the Exchequer-bill office itself. The hon. Member for Surrey, who was interested for some of the holders of the Exchequer-bills, had stated that of which he entertained no doubt—namely, that there were innocent holders of Exchequer-bills. Many had come fairly by these bills, and might claim compensation on that ground; but then he must say, on the authority of a banker who sat in that House, that there had been heard in the City for some time rumours that there was something wrong about the Exchequer-bills; and this banker told him that he had himself a very narrow escape from them. He had the Gentleman's permission to state the facts, but not his name. Now, the Gentleman was a Member of the House, and if he stated anything incorrectly the gentleman could contradict him. [*Laughter.*] He did not intend what he had said to have caused a laugh. That Gentleman stated, that shortly before the discovery of the Exchequer-bill fraud, a person had come to him and said that he wanted a loan of 60,000*l.*, or any part of 60,000*l.*, on a deposit of Exchequer-bills. Exchequer-bills were, at that time, at a premium of from 12*s.* to 15*s.* The person wanting that loan offered 6 per cent. interest, money at the time being easily procured on good security, such as Exchequer-bills for 4 per cent. The banker having considered that subject, thought there was something about the transaction that he did not like, and told the person making the application, that if he was in want of money, he had better sell the bills than borrow money on them at such a rate of interest. The same person afterwards went to one of the greatest capitalists in London, and made the same proposal. The answer of the capitalist was the answer of the prudent banker:—"You cannot afford to give such an amount of interest; if you want money so very badly as you represent yourself to do, you had much better sell the bills." Now, he thought, that when persons holding forged Exchequer-bills could be proved to have received them under such circumstances, they could have no claim whatever for compensation; for whatever might have been the amount of carelessness of parties connected with the Exchequer-bill-office, they could not excuse the gross carelessness of parties receiving Exchequer-bills under such circumstances. But, while the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been properly severe on those who had taken Exchequer-bills under suspicious circumstances, the right hon. Gentleman had not been sufficiently severe on the carelessness exhibited at the Exchequer-bill-office. He thought, that from the documents before the House, from the letter of the Comptroller-general, and likewise from the report of the commissioners, the country had a very fair subject of complaint against the Exchequer-bill-office. He wished to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if the statement which he was able to make was correct or not. He had been informed that at the time when the Exchequer-bill-office was remodelled, a person acquainted with that department had called the attention of the persons in authority to the fact, that Mr. Beaumont Smith was possessed of a great deal of power, and that there was no check upon him, and his was the only department on which there was no check. He believed that the present Comptroller of the Exchequer was at that time the Chancellor of the Exchequer [" *No, no.*"] At least, that noble Lord was then connected with the Treasury, and that the representation to which he referred was not attended to. If the representation were made, he did not know why it was not attended to, or why such powers should have been left to Mr. Beaumont Smith. As to those powers it was plain that they had been monstrously abused. It was not necessary for him to mention other instances of carelessness, as they must come before the commissioners at the proper time. All he should now do was to call the attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the fact, that there was such carelessness in the Exchequer-bill-office as to justify the public in believing that much compassion should be felt for the innocent holders of Exchequer bills. There was no care as to the stamped paper of the Exchequer-Bill-office, whereas the paper of the Bank of England was treated as so much valuable property before, as after the signature. There was] great carelessness in this respect; and the feeling of the public was, that there was not proper attention on the part of the Exchequer-bill-office, and the consequence was, that great hardship and serious injury were inflicted on the holders of Exchequer-bills, who were suffering on that account.

Mr. *Blewitt* said, there were one or two points on which he wished to set the House right. The right hon. Gentleman, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had spoken of the Exchequer-bills in question as forgeries; but he begged to say, that it was not quite clear as yet that they were forgeries; for he was perfectly satisfied from what had already transpired, that Mr. Beaumont Smith had had many opportunities of obtaining the official signatures to these bills; and, therefore, had no need to commit any forgery. He was, therefore, of opinion, that as a reasonable doubt existed on that important point, the parties holding these bills should, as a matter of justice and right, have the benefit of those doubts. Having made these observations in justice to those persons, he had only to add, that he fully concurred in the motion of the right hon. Gentleman.

Sir *Robert Inglis* remarked, that the motion now in the hands of the Speaker, begged the question which ought to be the subject of inquiry; and that was, whether the bills withdrawn by the Government from the hands of the holders were, or were not, forged. He had had communication with several gentlemen on this subject, but he had entered that House utterly unfettered as to the course he might take, and until he had heard the statement of his right hon. Friend he had not come to any determination upon the matter. The right hon. Gentleman had drawn an analogy which had previously been drawn by a high authority, and, notwithstanding the combined authority of both, he thought the analogy was entirely fallacious. The analogy was instituted between the holders of those spurious bills, and those who were holders of forged bank-notes. The distinction between the two cases was this, that the forged bank-notes did not come from the Bank at all, while the bills which were the subject of this motion were actually issued from the Government department which had the issuing of them. Whether they came out by one door of that department, or by another door, whether on the right hand, or on the left, whether by a breach of confidence or not, they came forth from the Exchequer. The bills, as he took it, were perfect in every respect but the signature. The paper was the Government paper, the seal was the Government seal, and the office from which they were issued was the Government office for issuing them. [*No, no.*] That might be a matter for inquiry. He was not aware, that the point was one that had been contested; with the single exception of the signature being forged, the issuing of these bills appeared to him to be the act of the officer of the department to whom it properly belonged to perform that act. He felt, that his right hon. Friend had prejudiced the case by drawing an analogy between bank-notes being forged, and by saying, that it would be an encouragement to fraud, if a bank were to pay a *bonâ fide* holder who presented a forged instrument. But this was the case of an instrument brought to the Government by whom it had been issued.

Mr. *F. T. Baring* had a very few words to say on this subject. He entirely concurred in the propriety of the course suggested by the right hon. Gentleman. He was glad that the right hon. Gentleman had felt it to be his duty to originate a commission with full powers to investigate this subject, which, upon every ground, required, in his opinion, a full and complete investigation. For that purpose, too, he preferred a commission to a committee. It had been properly stated that if a committee of that House had been appointed, it would be impossible for gentlemen not to be worried by applications; and whether or not they were swayed by these applications, it would be impossible to disabuse the public mind of the impression that parties had been screened, or that there had not been a sufficiently pressing inquiry into the conduct of all parties, that is, supposing the inquiry to be conducted by Members of that House. He should not have added a single word on the subject, if it were not for what had been said by the hon. Member for Westminster—that a communication had been made to the Treasury, at the time of the arrangement of the Exchequer office, with respect to Mr. Beaumont Smith, and the power that he had. He was at the Treasury at the time, and most of the arrangements were carried into execution by himself, he being then Secretary of the Treasury, and he could assure the House that the first time he had ever heard of the slightest information or fact that could excite suspicion in his mind, was not until he saw that the Government was taking measures to pursue an inquiry into this matter. Up to that time there had not been a single hint of any kind to the Government of any fraud being carried on with regard to Exchequer-bills. He had himself the personal arrangement and personal selection of the officers, and he could state distinctly that no recommendation of any kind was attended to, from the chief clerk down to the lowest officer, except those made by Mr. Bedford and Mr. Bully, the proper officers of the Exchequer. Every endeavour, every care, had been bestowed in selecting the most fit officers. No recommendation of any kind had been attended to except through the public department. Unfortunately this was an instance that the greatest care could not always secure a good public servant; for if there was one individual more than another into whose character and conduct a particular scrutiny was made, it was with regard to this very Mr. Beaumont Smith. It would, he thought, be better not to follow the hon. Baronet opposite into the discussion as to whether the Exchequer-bills came from one door or another of the office. He did not wish to say any thing which might lead to the discussion of a question which was not properly before the House. He entirely concurred in the course proposed by the right hon. Gentleman. He apprehended, from the statement of the right hon. Gentleman, that the inquiry was to be as to facts, and the evidence on which those facts rested; but he took it as a matter of course that it was to be referred to the commissioners to ascertain whether parties were entitled to compensation.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer:* Certainly not.

Mr. *Leader* conceived that, according to the evidence, Smith had absolute power, and there was no check upon the exercise of that power.

Colonel *Sibthorp* had the greatest desire that a complete investigation should take place as to this important affair, and he confessed, that had not his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer given notice to move for a commission this evening, he would have most cordially seconded the motion of the hon. Member for Monmouth. He thought the measure which his right hon. Friend proposed would be one more likely to succeed in procuring a strict, clear, and impartial examination of all the facts of the case. From the evidence of Lord Monteagle, he thought it quite clear that there had been a want of proper supervision in the office in which Beaumont Smith had been first clerk. He also found that Lord Monteagle had signed Exchequer-bills in places where he had no access to documents which could enable him to decide whether the bills so submitted to him were genuine or not. In taking up the question as he had done, he could have no motive but the one of doing his duty, but when he looked to the acts of Parliament for regulating the business of the Comptroller-general and Assistant Comptroller-general, under whose superintendence the office was placed, he found that their provisions had been violated. The two assistant comptrollers had also signed twice as many bills as the noble Lord himself. He was exceedingly glad the House had sanctioned the measure under which the investigation was to take place, and he called on the right hon. Gentleman to suffer no want of the strictest and most impartial examination, and to let truth be known, let the blame attach to whom it might, whether to the parties who had raised money on the bills, or to those who were charged with the management of the offices. Such an investigation should be carried on with the greatest strictness, and brought before the public with all possible care, and then it would be made evident that means had been taken to arrive at the truth.

Mr. *Ricardo* would only ask the Government to bring in their bill as soon as possible.

Mr. *Wakley* said, that many hon. Members did not fully understand the statement of the right hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The question was this: was the commission to extend its enquiries to all the circumstances under which the bills were issued, or merely as to how the holders had become possessed of those bills? If the inquiry were to be restricted to the last point, he did not believe that the public would be satisfied. His own opinion was, that the people of this country were quite prepared for Parliament to give remuneration to *bonâ fide* holders. The people of this country would consider the character of the Government and of the Legislature to be lowered if they allowed any party to lose, in consequence of gross mismanagement in a department of the Government. Conceiving then as he did, that the impression on the public mind was, that the *bonâ fide* holders of what had turned out to be spurious Exchequer-bills should be compensated for their loss, he thought that the public was entitled to the fullest and most searching investigation as to the manner in which those bills had been issued from the Exchequer-office, or wherever else they might have come from; the public had a full right to be informed of every matter connected with their issue; and if it should appear that that issue of spurious bills had been the effect of any negligence or mismanagement at the Exchequer-office, the public thought that the *bonâ fide* holders of these bills should not suffer in consequence. In the discussion which must ensue, they would have the opportunity of finding out what was meant by the word responsibility—Government responsibility. He had often wished to find out the true test of the application of the phrase. They often heard such expressions as "this is done upon the responsibility of Government," or "that is done on the responsibility of Government." Well, he supposed that the Exchequer-bills in question had been issued upon the responsibility of Government, and he wished exactly to know what the assertion really meant. He wished to know whether or not it meant that the parties who might be convicted of behaving improperly should be punished. He was not desirous that they should undergo any very acute degree of mental suffering, but he did not approve of the pockets of the people suffering from the faults of certain parties. He, therefore, thought that if any negligence should be discovered as having existed in the Exchequer-bill office, the word "responsibility" should be used in its true meaning. He was anxious for the result of the promised investigation, and if it should appear that negligence had existed, and yet that the parties involved in the charge had escaped, he could only say that the opinion of the public as to the value of the expression "responsibility of Government," would be very much lowered.

Mr. *S. Wortley* said, his object was to call the attention of the House to a part of the subject which appeared to him to have been overlooked in the discussion. Hon. Gentlemen had directed their attention to the mode in which the issue of the bills in question was said to have taken place, and to the nature of the fraud committed, subjects which would be made matter of further inquiry. But there was another part of the question upon which a few explanatory words were due to the House. He thought it would be as well if his right hon. Friend would explain the steps which had been taken to verify the authenticity of the bills at present in circulation. They knew that certain steps had been taken with this view, but the public might have more confidence in the result of those steps, if it were shown that real means existed for the satisfactory elucidation of the subject. He believed that such would be found to be the case, but still some explanatory statements would prove satisfactory. Another subject to which he would briefly allude was, that it was well known that Government was exposed to considerable obloquy for its step in impounding the spurious Exchequer-bills presented. He had no doubt but that good reasons could be pointed out for the course which had been pursued—but still blame had been cast on the Government for pursuing a course which, as the holders of the bills in question believed, had cut off their claims for compensation on the country.

Sir *R. Peel* rose to make a few observations with reference to what had fallen from the hon. Member for Finsbury (Mr. Wakley). That hon. Gentleman had asserted that the country was prepared to give compensation to the *bonâ fide* holders of spurious Exchequer bills. Now, he hoped the House would not at once give its sanction to any such principle. It was most desirable to have a full and searching inquiry into the circumstances connected with the issue of the bills in question. It was quite clear that the principle contended for by the hon. Member, ought not to be established until the full facts of the question had been laid before the House.

His right hon. Friend (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) had been quite misunderstood, if it was implied from anything which he had said that he meant to state that all the holders of spurious bills were to be charged with negligence, much less with criminality. But still there might be cases in which criminality might be proved, and he was, therefore, most anxious that the House should be well assured of the facts of the case, by means of the most searching inquiry, before they proceeded to discuss any matter relating to compensation. The hon. Member for Finsbury had inquired whether the investigation of the commission moved for would be a complete one. He apprehended that it could not be otherwise. The commission would have power to protect the Crown, as well as to guarantee the interests of individuals; and it would have full power to call for persons, papers, and records—to inquire how the bills came into the possession of the several holders—and generally to ascertain all the circumstances of the cases presented to its notice. He did not think it either necessary or expedient to go further into the question at present. With reference to the question put, as to the means which the Government had taken to inquire into the genuineness of the Exchequer-bills at present in circulation, he would merely refer to the premium at which Exchequer-bills stood, as a pretty plain proof that the public was satisfied with the means which had been taken to ascertain their authenticity. To go through the exact mode by which the point in question had been ascertained, would, he thought, answer no good purpose. The public, he repeated, was satisfied that the investigation had been an effectual one. He trusted that the House would avoid giving expression to any opinion with reference to compensation to the holders of spurious bills. It was a subject involving extended interests, and of much importance. It would come legitimately under the notice of the House at a future period. He trusted, therefore, that the House would avoid expressing any opinion upon the subject of compensation until the full facts of the subject should be before it.

Dr. *Bowring* thought the ends of justice would be satisfied by the course adopted by the right hon. Gentleman. He hoped no time would be lost in carrying through the bill, in order that the commission might proceed with their inquiries as soon as possible. If the Government could communicate anything further with reference to the character of the commission, he was sure in the present state of affairs it would be received by the public with the greatest satisfaction.

Mr. *Turner* wished to know what steps had been taken with the view of ascertaining the amount of spurious bills issued. It was possible that Rapallo might have carried off large quantities with him He wished also that when the decision of the commission should have been come to, and which he hoped would be as speedily as possible—if that decision should be in favour of compensation to the holders—that then a time should be appointed for the settlement of their claims, and a period should be fixed beyond which no application should be received. After the opinion expressed by the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government, he felt it would be exceedingly unbecoming in him to prolong this discussion; but there was a circumstance that had occurred within his personal knowledge some years ago, which as somewhat analogous to the present case, he should take that opportunity of mentioning. About twenty-five years ago, it happened that 1,000 1*l.* notes in blank, having been incautiously left on the counter of the Tenbury bank, were stolen. It was matter of notoriety in the neighbourhood that the circumstance had occurred, and in the course of two months afterwards, nearly the whole of those notes were returned and presented at the bank, forged. It became, therefore, a question with the proprietary of the bank, with which he was connected, how far the public had a right to call upon them for payment under such circumstances, and they certainly did come to the conclusion that they should, and they did, pay those notes. That they considered but justice, and he had no doubt that ample justice would also be done in the present case.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that the hon. Member for the West Riding of Yorkshire had alluded to the impounding of the forged Exchequer-bills. He could only say in reply, that it was considered to be most expedient not to leave masses of such bills in circulation; and as he had been assured by the highest legal authorities that the course most proper to be adopted was, that of impounding the spurious bills, directions to that effect had been given and acted upon. Notice, however, had been given to each of the holders of the detained bills that if they were required for the purpose of furthering the ends of justice or the claim of their proprietors, the bills in question would be at all times accessible for such purposes. The best proof of the correctness of this statement was the fact, that parties had actually obtained their bills for the purposes alluded to, and, when those purposes had been answered, had again returned the bills to the Exchequer-office. As to the question put, with respect to the time when claims of compensation would be settled, supposing the commission to decide in favour of that compensation, he begged leave to state, that the hon. Member for Truro, in putting the question, had misunderstood the sphere of operations of the commission. The question of compensation was not to be referred to the commission at all.

Mr. *Blewitt* hoped the right hon. Gentleman would not prejudice the claims of *bonâ fide* holders by describing, in the title of his bill, the spurious bills as "forged."

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* could see no difficulty, if the clauses of the bill were altered in that respect, to have the title modified accordingly.

Sir *R. Inglis* hoped there would be no objection to introducing the word "issue" before "receipt and circulation."

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* had no objection to that alteration being made in the resolution.

Mr. *Blewitt* gave notice that when the bill was brought in he should move that the word "forged" be expunged.

Mr. *Kemble* put it to the right hon. Gentleman whether "repudiated" would not answer his purpose quite as well as "forged." He felt the inconvenience of prolonging the present discussion, or he could state facts which had come to his knowledge which would convince the right hon. Gentleman that they should not by the use of any word imply at once that these bills were "forged."

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* apprehended that the title would by no means bind the House; if the details were altered in committee the title might afterwards be altered in conformity with them. He could state very good reasons why the word "repudiated" should not be substituted.

Mr. *Hawes* said, that an effort would be made, by those claiming compensation, to prove that the bills were not forged.

Sir *T. Wilde*: Why not use the words "alleged to be forged?" That description would meet the views of all parties.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* did not think "alleged to be forged" would be an improvement. It might happen that many genuine bills were "alleged to be forged," and the commission would so far be pursuing an irrelevant investigation. He would take the point into consideration, but would rather not alter the phraseology until he was perfectly aware what the effect of the alteration might be. In the meanwhile, as the title did not affect the possibility of making any alterations in the provisions of the bill which might be thought necessary, he would certainly rather adhere to it as it was.

Mr. *Hawes* understood the right hon. Gentleman to insist on the retention of the word, not as a declaration on his part, or on the part of the Government, that those bills were forged—that matter being left open to the consideration of the House.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he left that question entirely open to the consideration of the House. He adhered, however, to his own title, until he should be satisfied that it was wrong. If the House altered the bill in committee, the title, as he had already stated, might be changed as well.

Leave given to bring in a bill for appointing commissioners to inquire as to the issue, receipt, circulation, and possession of certain forged Exchequer-bills.

RAILROADS (IRELAND).] Mr. *F. French* rose, in pursuance of the notice he had given, to move—

> "That the House resolve itself into a committee of the whole House, for the purpose of preparing an address to her Majesty, praying that she would be graciously pleased to recommend to Parliament that such measures shall be taken as may appear most likely to secure to Ireland the advantages of railway communication."

He said this subject could not fairly be considered a party question, and he should certainly have brought it under the notice of the House had his right hon. Friends near him continued in office. He had more than once declared in that House his strong conviction, that unless her

Majesty's Government undertook the construction of railways in Ireland, or gave considerable assistance towards their formation, that country would to an indefinite period be deprived of those great means of social improvement. The period which had since elapsed had strengthened his conviction, and must, he thought, have shown to the most sanguine advocates of the private enterprise system that any hopes they might have entertained of these objects being attained by such means were utterly fallacious, and he was prepared to show by numerous documents that such was their opinion, two of which he had selected, as they had been already made public in pamphlets. The first was the opinion of a gentleman well known in the scientific world, Captain Moorsom, an active and intelligent director of one of the largest of the English railway companies, who stated—

> "He was bound by duty and disposed by inclination to uphold the interests of those who elected him as director, and though he at one time partook of the current impression that works of this nature were best left to private enterprise, experience had since convinced him of the contrary; that it appeared to him the most important object of railways was the benefit of the public who were to use them, and that their construction under parliamentary control by advances of public money would more effectually and permanently secure that benefit than their construction by means of the capital of private individuals, and he contended that railways should not be allowed to fall into the hands of joint-stock companies in Ireland, for three reasons. 1. Because in that country a system might now be carried into effect which should avoid the evils arising out of the want of such a system in England; 2, because by advancing public money for such works Ireland would come at once into the enjoyment of the many and great advantages of railway communication, and thus, in that respect, keep pace with England; and, 3, because the public would have persons and goods conveyed at the lowest fares and rates compatible with the existence of railways."

Mr. Bermingham, chairman to the general Irish Railway Committee stated that—

> "He had worked strenuously and earnestly for private enterprise so long as he had reason to believe it was capable of carrying out the system in a comprehensive manner, but so soon as he ascertained that without great pecuniary assistance from the state it was out of the question to expect that the leading lines so necessary to Ireland could be made, he yielded his first opinion, and became a thorough convert to the principle that if an extended system of railroads (which the wants of Ireland demanded) was ever to be made, it must be by the State."

The question then narrowed itself to this,—were they sitting then in the Parliament of the United Kingdom to deny to so large a portion of the empire as Ireland the power of raising a sufficient sum on her own credit, and upon the most ample security, for the purpose of obtaining these valuable means of developing her neglected resources, and of ameliorating, which all must admit to be desirable and necessary, the condition of her people? To prove that no other means were left to them than those of Government construction or Government interference, it was alone necessary to refer to the feeble and disjointed efforts of private enterprise in Ireland for accomplishing this object during a period which had been remarkable for the greatest possible degree of private exertion and public excitement on the subject of railways. Up to the year 1838 inclusive, 112 private acts were passed for the construction of railways in England and Wales, 21 for Scotland, and but 8 for Ireland. The proportions of national prospects indicated by those numbers must awaken painful reflections in the minds of the Irish people; but the relative position of that country in the race of national improvement was never less favourable than these figures would lead them to imagine. Up to the present moment five out of those eight acts remained a dead letter; and whilst they contemplated the extraordinary impulse given to commerce in this country by means of the railroads already in operation, which traversed it in every direction, and those in progress of construction, turn to Ireland and they would find that six miles of railway from Dublin to Kingstown, and seven from Belfast to Lisburn, since carried on to Portseadown, were all that private speculation, during that period of excitement, had been enabled to accomplish in that country. Whether this had been caused, as some considered, from the report of the Railway Commissioners having underrated the probable advantages derivable from this mode of investing capital in Ireland, or from the absence of capital in that country applicable to such works, or, as others contended, from the uncertainty existing in the minds of capitalists as to the intentions of Government, he should not take on himself to deliver an opinion. The facts were unfortunately as he had stated, and so were they apparently destined to remain. There was no disposition on the part of the public to invest money in Irish speculations. According to the last report of the directors of the Dublin and Kingstown railway that line was returning a net profit of 8 per cent.; notwithstanding which its shares were at a discount of 25 per cent. It might be well to briefly run over what had been done in reference to this great question by her Majesty's late Government. On the 28th of October, 1836, in accordance with an address from the other House of Parliament, a Royal Commission was issued to the late Mr. Drummond, Sir John Burgoyne, Professor Barlow, and Mr. Griffith, the head of the Ordnance Survey in Ireland, gentlemen of the highest ability, who were directed to consider a general system of railways in Ireland, either by a survey or otherwise, such as would serve as a guide to the legislature in any future projects that might be brought before them; and also to inquire into the best mode of directing the developement of this new and important means of intercourse to the channel whereby the greatest advantages might be obtained at the smallest outlay. They were also desired to take into consideration, not only the existing means which the country presented, but those which might be anticipated from the resources to be in future developed, and they were to take into consideration the point from which the communication with America might be best carried on. On the 11th of March, 1837, their first report was presented; it was a short one, merely showing the difficulties of the question submitted to their consideration, the conflicting interests it involved, and the necessity for maturely considering it in all its important bearings. It, however, contained an important statement, one which made a most unfavourable impression on the minds of those capitalists who were disposed to embark their money in railway undertakings in Ireland—namely, that the selection of the leading lines ought not to be left to private companies. Now, as it was vain to expect that private parties would embark their money in speculations of this nature without the most perfect freedom of choice in the lines likely to prove remunerative undertakings, the effect of this declaration of the commissioners was sufficient to destroy, and in fact did destroy, all hopes of railroads in Ireland from private enterprise, and this he contended gave them great and peculiar claims on the consideration of Parliament, as at the time that report was made there was every reason to suppose that both the Kilkenny and the Western lines would have been made by private companies. On the 13th of June, 1838, their second report was laid on the Table of this House. That important and valuable document, which had been attributed, he believed correctly, to one of the ablest men of the day, the late Mr. Drummond—a report which contained as much knowledge, as much research, and as much information as were ever presented in any public document by persons appointed under a commission from the Crown—that report clearly proved that the system which had been pursued in respect of railroads in this country was wholly fallacious; it showed beyond the possibility of refutation, that these great works ought not to be left in Ireland, as here, to be accomplished by separate and isolated lines, constructed by companies whose chief aim and object must be their private interest; and it recommended, as the only means by which the great evils of the English system could be avoided, a well-combined and judicious system of railways to be executed by the Government in Ireland, under regulations to be enforced by effective superintendence and control. The danger of leaving these works to private companies, the unnecessary expenses both legal and Parliamentary incurred, the extravagant demands for compensation from landowners or others, the vexatious opposition and ruinous competition of rival companies, were all pointed out; every item of which expense must eventually be defrayed by the public, and that those expenses were of no trifling nature was shown by the returns before the House. For parliamentary and other preliminary expenses, compensation, &c., eight railway lines in England had to pay the enormous sum of 1,137,000*l.*, 15½ per cent. on their entire cost. The London and Birmingham company, whose railway was 112½ miles in length paid for parliamentary expenses 72,868*l.*, for compensation or preliminary expenses 735,087*l.*; the Great Western, 117½ miles in length, upwards of 100,000*l.* for parliamentary, and 720,000*l.* for other expenses. The expenses of the Brighton line before Parliament exceeded 100,000*l.*; they paid for land 400,000*l.* The South Western 75½ miles, paid for parliamentary expenses 42,000*l.*, for compensation 298,000*l.* The original estimate for the London and Birmingham was 2,500,000*l.*; it cost 5,690,375*l.* 4*s.* 7*d.* The estimate for the Great Western was 2,500,000*l.*; it cost 4,508,160*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.* The estimate for the Liverpool and Manchester was 300,000*l.*, it cost 1,430,304*l.* 18*s.* 5*d.* The estimate for the South Western was 1,000,000*l.*; it cost upwards of 2,000,000*l.* The result of all this was, that the public had to pay a higher rate of fares for railway travelling by 120 per cent. than would have been the case had a system similar to that pursued by the Belgian government been adopted. He found the weekly amount received in the month of September last, on the thirty lines of railway, the traffic returns of which were published, was 88,503*l.* 17*s.* 1*d.*, at which rate the annual receipts would amount to 5,002,200*l.* 8*s.* 4*d.* The fare from London to Liverpool, in a first class carriage was 2*l.* 13*s.*, the distance being 195 miles, or an average of 3⅜*d.* per passenger per mile. Now, it appeared from the official report published by the minister of public works in Belgium, M. Nothomb, that the fare chargeable in a first class carriage in Belgium was about 1½*d.* per mile per passenger; so that the public were charged in this country about 120 per cent. higher for railway travelling than they were in Belgium. Allow 20 per cent. on the receipts in this country, on account of the natural advantages in levels which Belgium possessed, and assuming there was the same difference in the carriage of parcels as of passengers, still you had, by the errors of your system, entailed an annual tax on the public in respect of this mode of travelling to the enormous amount of 2,500,000*l.* sterling. This was calculating the charge of conveyance of passengers at 3½*d.* per head per mile. In many of the acts which had been passed, the companies had the power of charging at the rate of 6*d.* per head per mile; in two acts no limit was fixed in the tonnage dues; there was a most extraordinary want of uniformity in the different acts; the carriage of limestone varied from 1*d.* to 3*d.* per ton per mile; just 200 per cent; coal from ½*d.* to 4*d.*—800 per cent; manufactured goods from 2*d.* to 6*d.*—300 per cent.; and sheep from ¼*d.* per mile to 3*d.*, or 1,100 per cent. Was it desirable that such a system as this should be extended to Ireland? Attention was drawn by the report to the obvious fact, that as railway speed increased the expenses of the line were increased in a high proportion; and that there, therefore, existed the strongest temptations to railway companies to diminish the velocity to a rate little exceeding that of the modes of conveyance they had superseded, an evil which could only be corrected by the most objectionable means of *ex post facto* legislation. The commissioners merely remarked that the great errors which had been committed in England were mainly attributable to the suddenness with which the invention had burst upon the country, as well as to the imperfect view which had been taken, both of its extraordinary power, and the extent to which the public interests were involved in its just application and management, and they called on the House to preserve Ireland, where the ground was yet untrodden, from similar acts, and to secure to it, as they then could, and now could do, at a moderate expense, all the advantages which railways were capable of affording. He had mentioned, that prior to this report, eight railway acts for Ireland had been obtained—one for constructing a railway from the city of Limerick to the town of Carrick, in the county of Tipperary, passed in 1826; the Dublin and Kingstown Act in 1831; this line was opened to the public in 1834. In 1832 an act was passed for making a short line from Belfast to some quarries in its neighbourhood, called the Belfast and Casehill Railway. In 1836 two companies, the Ulster and the Dublin and Drogheda, obtained their acts, and three in 1837—namely, the Dundalk and Ballybay, the Dublin and Kilkenny, and the Cork and Passage. The two most important of these were the Dublin and Drogheda, and the Dublin and Kilkenny, the first projecting the great northern, the second the great southern line of railway. The Drogheda company had a capital of 600,000*l.*, half of which had been subscribed by shareholders in Liverpool and Manchester; they had, according to their own statement, purchased seven miles of the way leading from Dublin, and had expended upwards of 100,000*l*. Still, so necessary did the combined system appear to the commissioners, that they recommended that another line, differing from, but parallel to, the Drogheda, should be undertaken by Government. Sanguine, indeed, must the speculator have been who could imagine two parallel lines of railway in Ireland were likely to prove remunerative. The directors, as shareholders of the Drogheda company, did not think so, and the report of the commissioners put a complete stop to the progress of the work. It was true they had again resumed, and they were six years after the passing of their act carrying out its provisions, and it was but justice to say, in a manner highly profitable to themselves. The public must reap very considerable advantages from this line when connected with the Ulster; a direct railway communication would be opened between Belfast and the entire north of Ireland with Dublin. In resuming work this company was more fortunate than their southern cotemporary and the other companies he had mentioned, not one of which had shown the slightest appearance of returning animation. To remedy those evils, to give to Ireland the advantage of railway communication, or, in his own words, "to promote the practical, the material benefit of the Irish people," his noble Friend, the late Secretary for Ireland, early in the Session of 1839 brought forward his measure for executing the lines recommended by the commissioners as public works, and obtained, by a majority of 44, the sanction of Parliament, to an outlay of 2,500,000*l*. for that purpose. This sum he proposed should be exclusively appropriated to the construction of the southern line from Dublin to Cork. He (Mr. French), in common with others, hailed this project of the noble Lord as a happy omen for the future prosperity of Ireland, and he endeavoured to impress on him and on the House, at the time it appeared successfully, that this sum would be more beneficially employed, and would tend more to develope the resources of the country, by constructing a given portion of three great lines, north, south, and west, to Carickmacross, Cashel, and Athlone. In this view he was strongly supported by the majority of the petitions presented to the House, and by the unanimous resolutions of public meetings in Ireland, called after the Government plan had been made known. At a very numerous and influential meeting, held at the Thatched-house, the 20th of April, 1839, it was unanimously agreed to,

> "That it is expedient that three great leading lines of railway in Ireland—one to the north, one to the south, and one to the west, should be simultaneously constructed; and, secondly, that any aid to railways in Ireland ought to be distributed in due proportion to the three provinces."

It was also resolved, at a meeting held at the Carlton Club, the right hon. Member for the University of Dublin (now Baron Lefroy) in the chair,

> "That the introduction of the railway system into Ireland under the control and direction of the State, if conducted upon perfectly impartial principles, is entitled to our most warm support."

No opportunity, however, was afforded of discussing these details, as his noble Friend, on account of the opposition offered to his plan by the right hon. Baronet, the Member for Tamworth, found himself compelled to abandon his measure. In 1840 he brought forward another, the principle of which was, that the necessary funds were to be advanced by private parties, to whom a certain rate of interest of 4 per cent. was to be guaranteed by those counties in Ireland which were supposed to be benefitted by the proposed work. This measure was printed, but on account of the political difficulties of Government, was never brought under the consideration of Parliament. The subject had been under discussion in that House upwards of six years, and as the Minister of Public Works in France remarked to the Chamber of Deputies last month, when laying before them his extensive plan for the formation of railroads in that country, "we had much lost time to make up." However he might personally regret the political changes which had taken place, he (Mr. French) sincerely hoped that the noble Lord who had succeeded to the office of Chief Secretary for Ireland would with equal anxiety to promote the interest, of that country, as all who were acquainted with him must admit him to have, prove to have greater power than his noble Friend to carry through the other House of Parliament measures by which Ireland might be rendered a source of strength and advantage, in place of weakness and disgrace, to the empire. It appeared to him, from the course pursued by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth, when this subject was under discussion, that he was not very strongly impressed with the advantages of extending railway communication throughout the kingdom. Should his supposition be correct, the right hon. Gentleman stood alone amongst the statesmen of Europe in this opinion. The powerful resources of France, the disposable income of Belgium, the limited means of the small German and Italian states, Prussia, Saxony, Russia, the cautious Government of Austria, the enterprising spirit of the United States, were all struggling towards one common object —the extension of railway communication throughout their respective dominions. France had now completed, or in progress, 350 miles of railway, in which capital to the amount of 7,000,000*l.* sterling was embarked; in addition to which M. Teste, the minister of Public Works, had a measure before the Chambers to allocate 20,000,000*l.* sterling to construct five great lines from Paris to the different boundaries of the country. Belgium had by M. Nothomb's report 350 miles, and had expended about 5,000,000*l.*; Austria, according to the Chevalier Von Geisner, had 410 miles, and a capital of 2,500,000*l.* in addition to which a further sum of 8,000,000*l.* was about to be allocated; Prussia had 300 miles, and a capital of 2,000,000*l.*; Saxony, eighty miles, and a capital of 900,000*l.*; America had completed 3,430, with a capital of 20,000,000*l.* There were in progress 2,000 miles, with a capital of 15,000,000*l.*; in addition to which there were proposed lines, some of which had been undertaken, to the extent of 5,948 miles. All this might be said to be the work of the last ten years. Prior to 1830 there were but three short lines throughout the United States—the Quincy in Massachusetts, but four miles, and two short ones in Pennsylvania, the Maunch Chunk and the Corbondale. Independent of the assistance given by the state governments to the different corporations, by whom the greater portion of these lines were constructed, sixteen railways were executed at the sole expense of the state governments, two in Pennsylvania, one in Georgia, one in Indiana, three in Michigan, and nine in Illinois. England had completed 1,750 miles of railway at an expense of 60,000,000*l.* sterling, 10,120,000*l.* of which had been swallowed up by parliamentary and preliminary expenses. Of this sum Mr. Hyde Clerk calculated 6,720,000*l.* were absolutely and unnecessarily wasted, a larger sum than would have constructed all the proposed railways in Ireland. Why should the Legislature of this country be more indifferent to the interests of its inhabitants than France, Belgium, Austria, or America? It was peculiarly an English object that the most remote parts of Ireland should be connected as intimately and as closely as possible with herself; and it was by opening to every part of that country the most direct and easy modes of communication with this, that that identity of feeling and interest could be obtained on which depended the prosperity and permanence of the union of the two countries. This was well put in a pamphlet which had recently been published. The writer said,—

> "Railways and steam are effecting a new economization of life, of business, of government, which neither ignorance can stop nor interest interrupt. They will be the great regenerating powers of Ireland. They will introduce into that country not only the muscle, but the mind, the enterprise, and the security of England, and impart to her new life, new feelings, new objects, and new interests. The more the case is considered, do advantages, benefits, conveniences, and accommodations multiply. It opens to Ireland, as it were, a new world, and discloses her resources to the enterprise and public spirit of England. In fact, it will call into existence a union which nothing can repeal."

He trusted that these considerations would have their due weight and influence on the mind of the right hon. Baronet, and that he would accord to them, as he had the power of doing, either by adopting the report of the Railway Commissioners, or by any other mode he might consider more expedient, those means, the most effective which modern science had discovered, for calling into action the powers and capabilities so long dormant amongst them. He had a soil to deal with, rich from the fallow of centuries of neglect; and amply would any outlay he might deem it advisable to make be repaid. From the opposition which any advance for public works to Ireland uniformly met with in Parliament, the House might naturally suppose that any assistance given to that country in this way must be attended with loss or at least with considerable risk. They might not be prepared to hear that the very reverse was the fact. The State, on the contrary, had derived very considerable profit on loans made to Ireland. The system had hitherto been to lend money for eleven years, repayable within that period by instalments at the interest of 5 per cent. The interest on 100*l.* for eleven years, at 5 per cent. would amount to 55*l.*, receivable by the State; the State paid for the same sum for the like period an interest of 3 per cent., which would amount to 33*l.*, gaining therefore 22 per cent. on the transaction. He found by a parliamentary paper that the money advanced by way of loan out of the consolidated fund in Ireland, from the 5th of January, 1809, to the 5th of January, 1834, was as follows:—

Post roads	£456,000
Turnpike debentures	41,000
Public works	634,000
Ditto..................	12,000
Ditto..................	43,000
Ditto..................	96,000
Ditto..................	85,000
Repairs of roads and bridges	36,000

making in all the sum of 1,403,000*l.* so lent during that period; the difference of interest gained by the nation on this advance amounted to no less a sum than 308,660*l.* This was, however, a mere trifle in comparison with the important national advantages resulting from the outlay, shown by the increasing revenue and the improved condition of the people. It was in evidence that an expenditure of 60,000*l.* in the south of Ireland brought an increase to the revenue of 50,000*l.* a year. The calculation, therefore, of the Railway Commissioners was not exaggerated. Men of great professional ability and experience, not likely to be influenced by Irish enthusiasm, or rashly to hazard an opinion, would tell you that an annual increase of 6,000,000*l.* to the revenue might be expected from giving us the use of the national credit alone. Let not the House underrate the importance of Ireland as an integral portion of the empire. Although the revenue of that country might be proportionally smaller as compared with her extent and population than that of Great Britain, it had been, and was, gradually and steadily increasing. In the year 1793 it amounted to 1,000,000*l.*, at present it had reached about 4,500,000*l.* Taking the tea and other duties paid in this country into account it exceeded 5,000,000*l.* By the parliamentary paper ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 28th April, 1841, No. 273, they found, that for the first five years after the Union Ireland paid into the British Exchequer 14,113,307*l.*, which was about one-fourteenth of the national revenue. During the five years ending 1840 she had paid 19,495,971*l.*, which was about one-twelfth of the national revenue. The increase of her imports and exports during the last twenty years had been most remarkable. As to the exports—horned cattle, in 1825, 64,000; in 1835, 99,000; and at the same ratio, in 1845, they would amount to 153,000. In like manner,

	1825.	1835.	1845.
Sheep . . .	72,000	126,000	220,000
Pigs had increased nearly sevenfold . .	66,000	377,000	—
	CWT.	CWT.	CWT.
Meal and Flour . .	600,000	1,981,000	6,540,000
Butter . . .	475,000	872,000	1,600,000
	QRS.	QRS.	
Wheat and Barley .	439,000	590,000	—

According to the returns presented to the House by the Vice-President of the Board of Trade on the 11th of February, the quantity of wheat and wheat flour imported into England from Ireland was, in the year 1825, 336,000 quarters; in 1835, 661,776 quarters. Oats and oatmeal, in the year 1800 but 2,411 quarters, had, in the year 1841, increased to 2,539,380 quarters.

	1825.	1835.	1845.
	YARDS.	YARDS.	YARDS.
Cottons Manufactured .	4,996,000	14,172,000	40,201,000
Woollens . . .	6,400,000	7,884,000	9,712,000
	LBS.	LBS.	LBS.
Tea	3,900,000	4,795,000	5,895,000
Coffee . . .	336,000	1,205,000	4,521,000

This increase showed more strongly than words could do how essential it was to the future prosperity of England that the resources of Ireland should be speedily developed. It would supply a new market for their manufactures, a new supply of food for their artisans, and a new and fertile source of revenue for the State. In proportion as the resources of Ireland were called forth, would the burdens of England be diminished. Those resources could be fully developed by allowing them to avail themselves of what they had used with no sparing hand for their own purposes—the credit of the United Kingdom. Since 1817 loans to the amount of 12,000,000*l.*, money borrowed on the credit of the United Kingdom, had been sanctioned by the Exchequer Loan Commissioners for the improvements of England. The largest annual sums voted for this purpose were by the 57th of Geo. 3rd, and the 3rd of Geo. 4th., when the right hon. Baronet, the Member for Tamworth, was in power. On what principle could he refuse to deal with Ireland in a similar spirit? They asked no more—they would be contented with no less; both justice and enlightened policy demanded that it should be conceded to them. The express condition upon which the Poor-law Bill for Ireland passed through that House was, that considerable assistance should be given to the people by means of public works in that country. Again, there was the importance to this country of facilitating the intercourse with Ireland. Having trespassed so long on the indulgence of the House, he would conclude by submitting the motion which he had already announced.

The *Speaker* said, he collected from the observations of the hon. Member, that the object of his motion was to obtain a grant of public money for the purpose of constructing railways in Ireland.

Mr. *F. French* said, he appeared to have been somewhat misunderstood by the way in which he had expressed himself. His object was to call the attention of the Government to this important subject; but not to point out to them any means by which the object in view could be attained. It was simply to make out good grounds for the interference of the Government.

Mr. *Shaw* rose for the purpose of seconding the motion of his hon. Friend. In doing that he had a twofold object. First, he desired, if possible, to dissuade his hon. Friend from pressing his motion at that moment. His meaning was, that he had an unaffected desire to support the object of his hon. Friend, but he felt that, considering the condition of the public finances, that the financial statement of the Government had not yet been laid before the House, and that they were not in possession of that information which alone could enable them to come to a satisfactory conclusion, if they came to a decision upon the subject at that time, it must be unfavourable to the views which he held in common with his hon. Friend. He thought it, therefore, unwise and inconvenient that the motion should be pressed. His second object was to state to the House his entire concurrence with his hon. Friend in wishing to promote the introduction of railways in Ireland; and he should be sorry to let slip an opportunity of expressing his most anxious desire that all Irish Members should be united in the promotion of a measure, the object of which was the real and permanent interest of Ireland, and the development of her national resources, without reference to party differences or the kind of agitation upon which their energies had been thrown away, and which formed an excuse and justification to the House and the Government to overlook those Irish objects of great public moment and importance which, with the cordial goodwill and co-operation of all parties in Ireland, might be attained. He would not go into the various points of the subject, but he must say, that from all the information he had been able to procure from the reports of railway companies and committee of that House, he believed that if a system of railways were to be introduced into Ireland, it would be better and more effectual if it were a combined and general system, as distinguished from a system backed by different bodies having separate, and oftentimes, opposite interests. The introduction of a public measure by her Majesty's Government, adopting a general plan as to the management and control of such ways, would greatly facilitate the introduction of a system of railways into Ireland, and it would be highly advantageous if that system were combined, and there were a common station in the metropolis for the three great northern, western, and southern lines. He said, that the very difference whether the system would be remunerative or not would turn on the fact, whether they were conducted on that general and common principle, or as mere private speculations. One great object was the facility of communication between London and Dublin, and he would venture an opinion, that by combining those cities by means of a railway through Wales, the whole journey might be performed in the time that was now consumed in an average passage between Dublin and Liverpool—namely, fourteen hours; and that, indeed, was one reason why he was anxious that they should come to no premature decision. But, besides saving time, when London and Dublin were connected by means of that railway, they would then have a point whence to start main trunks through every part of the country. And if Irish Members and Irish interests did prevail with the Government to countenance that improvement, and the opening of a system of railways throughout Ireland on a general and combined principle, they would have some public spirited persons taking it up, and he was persuaded there would be a full return for the money that might be expended; he did not mean by the indirect means of an improved condition of the country, but by a direct return in the way of public economy; by the saving of Post-office communication and otherwise, the Government would save a sum considerably greater than any they would be called upon to spend in promoting the object which he was so anxious in the main to see established. If, however, his hon. Friend should persist in his motion, as he considered that they had not sufficient information before them at that period, he would ask his noble Friend the Secretary for Ireland not at present to come to any decision on the subject, or at least, not to come to any unfavourable decision respecting it.

Mr. *Redington* said, the right hon. Gentleman had backed the motion of his hon. Friend in a very indifferent manner. The House was then called upon to say whether this Government, as the former one had done, should support the introduction of railways in Ireland. He would speak of the report of the Railway Commissioners with the greatest respect as to the ability with which it had been drawn up, but he considered that it was not such a report as justified the Government in carrying into effect an universal system of railways in that country; and he confessed, he had great doubt whether, by the Government taking upon itself the entire regulation of those railways, they might not be travelling too fast. He knew that much might be done by the encouragement of public works—which after all did not pay, and that more distress might be created by holding out hopes that might never be realised. But at the same time he must say, that a great deal was due to Ireland in the way of promoting intercourse with that country, and increasing her resources. When hon. Gentlemen had been legislating for the last fortnight upon a subject materially affecting the agricultural interests of Ireland, they ought to be more liberal in encouraging the construction of public works in that country. He did not wish to ask her Majesty's Ministers to come forward and propose a grant of public money, but he thought that the bill which was laid on the Table of that House in the early part of last year, containing a provision that acts for railways in Ireland should be public and not private acts, proposed a much better system than was adopted in England. If, indeed, the Government had exercised a more general superintendence over rail ways in this country many of those difficulties, respecting which inquiries were then going on, might have been avoided. Before he sat down he would refer to a petition which he had presented to the House, praying that the railways from Belfast to Portadown, and from Dublin to Drogheda, might be united. He believed that that proposition was made by parties equally interested in both those railways. They did not seek pecuniary aid, they wished the road to be completed, and all they sought was a certain guarantee on the part of the Government of a small interest on their capital. All they asked from the Government was a guarantee of 4 per cent. upon one-half of the principal advanced; but with that guarantee they could at once sink their capital, and give the Government a mortgage of all the railway property. In conclusion he would suggest to the Government, that without being called upon to advance considerable sums of money, they might extend, even in the present condition of their finances, considerable aid with regard to railways in Ireland, by giving facilities to bills being passed through that House in the same way as had been done in the case of several of the railways in this country.

Lord *Eliot* said, that before the hon. Gentleman (Mr. French) answered the question which had been put by the Speaker, he was about to acknowledge the very candid and manly manner in which he had explained the object of his motion. He confessed, however, that from the answer which the hon. Gentleman gave to that question, he was at a loss to understand what the hon. Gentleman proposed. The motion of the hon. Gentleman was,—

> "That this House resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, for the purpose of preparing an Address to her Majesty, praying that she would be graciously pleased to recommend to Parliament that such measures shall be taken as may appear most likely to secure to Ireland the advantages of railway communication."

The whole gist of the speech of his hon. Friend had been to show that no other means could avail for that purpose. Whether the hon. Gentlemen were right might be questionable; but he stated that without Government security no railways could be established in Ireland. He had himself some little difficulty on the subject, and was afraid of being misunderstood because, if he objected to the motion, it might be supposed that he took entirely different views from his hon. Friend, and undervalued the importance of railways in Ireland. He meant, however, no such thing, because, although he did not go quite the same length as his hon. Friend, still he was prepared to admit that great comfort, convenience, and advantage—and above all, the employment of the labouring classes, which, though not the only thing needful, was the one most needful to those classes, would result from the introduction of railways in Ireland. No one could see the labouring classes in Ireland without wishing to remove them from the state in which they were placed, and every one who knew that a stimulus only was wanting to their energies, and that with that stimulus, those energies might easily be called forth, must be most anxious to afford them a field for their exertions. But the plan which his hon. Friend proposed would bring them back to the point at which they had arrived in the year 1839; and here he would take that, the first opportunity he had had, of naming his noble predecessor in that House, to acknowledge the obligation he felt to the noble Lord for offering to him, in the most liberal manner, such advice and information as he was able to give with respect to Ireland. The private character of that noble Lord required no eulogy; but, from all that was known and heard of him in Ireland, he had carried away with him the good wishes of all classes of the community, and his political opponents bore no unwilling testimony to the kindness of his heart and the generosity of his disposition. Now, his noble predecessor had proposed, in 1839, as his hon. Friend had said, a plan, the object of which was to recognise the principle that the Government would undertake the construction of railways throughout Ireland. There was to be, he believed, some sort of security upon the county cess; and in the event of the returns of the railways not being sufficient to pay the expense, the Government was to be repaid by that rate. That, however, was a species of security almost illusory. In the first place, if anything like great distress occurred in Ireland, no Government could reimburse itself at such a time from that source; and it would be in the recollection of the House and of those hon. Members who took a part in that discussion, that the sum charged upon the county cess for the railways was by no means small. Mr. Griffith, the railway commissioner had stated, that the amount of the liability varied from 8*d.* and 9*d.* to 1*s.* 10*d.* and 2*s.* 2*d.* an acre. But the county cess already amounted to from 3*s.* 6*d.* to 4*s.* an acre; and he thought that the additional [charge upon the counties would, in many cases, be such as they would be unwilling to incur. He knew not whether any arrangement was to be made for dividing the burden between the owner and the occupier of the land; but if the change were to be borne by the occupying tenant, those persons who might derive little advantage from those railways, for several years might be saddled with a considerable part of that charge. It was true, that Parliament had confirmed the proposition of the noble Lord by majorities of forty and forty-four; but it must be recollected, that the proposition was so coldly received, although confirmed by the House, that the noble Lord took no other step respecting it. Nothing further was done until 1841, when the noble Lord brought forward a proposition, the principle of which he considered to be unobjectionable. The noble Lord facilitated the coming together of capitalists, and those parties who were interested in the completion of railways, and proposed that certain arrangements should be made between them. That principle was, he thought, unobjectionable. The whole duty of the Government was to take care that the arrangement was reasonable and satisfactory; but from what he had heard and seen in Ireland, he believed there was a considerable hesitation in the country to accede to the proposition. He was unwilling, on the part of the Government, to hold out any expectations which might lead to disappointment. It was better at once to say, that the Government could not consent to any plan which would involve an expenditure of the public money. The Railway Commissioners had pointed out certain modes, and the Government conceived them to be legitimate modes, by which the establishment of railways in Ireland might be facilitated. They recommended that, if private individuals could be found who were willing to furnish the capital necessary for establishing a railway in Ireland, the Government should interpose to protect them against being saddled with unnecessary expenses—that they should not be charged with the expenses usually consequent on obtaining an act of Parliament, and that the mode of determining the amount of compensation established on some fixed principle, independent of private and local bias. To such an extent as that he and his Colleagues were disposed to facilitate the enterprise of private individuals; but beyond that they thought it would be impolitic to go. The hon. Mover had referred to the example of continental states, and he was surprised that France, amongst others, had been adverted to, because the system pursued in that country was diametrically opposed to that which had always been followed in this. Public works in France were invariably conducted at the expense of the government, and private enterprise was almost unknown. Belgium, again, was a small country, and the expense of constructing railroads could consequently be easily ascertained. The case was different with respect to Ireland. If the Government should determine on granting the means for establishing a railroad between Dublin and Cork, they would soon be called upon to render similar assistance to other lines from the north and west. The hon. Member had talked about England treating Ireland like a step-child, if she refused pecuniary aid to the establishment of railroads in that country; but surely it must be allowed that every disposition to serve Ireland had been evinced by the appointment of the most eminent engineers to survey the country. Their report was before the public, and private individuals who wished to embark in speculations had an opportunity of knowing the grounds on which they were about to proceed. The official surveys would materially assist the operations of private companies. The hon. Member said, that it was impossible to find persons in Ireland willing to invest their capital in railroads; but he could state, on the best authority, that the shares in the Dublin and Drogheda, and Dublin and Ulster railroads were better paid up by the Irish than by the English shareholders, and that there had been fewer shares forfeited by the former than by the latter. The hon. Member had referred to the enormous increase in the amount of the Irish imports and exports, but he (Lord Eliot) could not see how an inference could be drawn from that fact favourable to a grant of money for the establishment of railroads in Ireland. For the reasons he had stated, he must, though with great reluctance, object to the motion before the House. The course which the Government felt it its duty to take on this occasion might be liable to misconstruction in Ireland but he thought it better to meet the proposition of the hon. Member, not, indeed, with a direct negative, but with the more courteous proceeding of moving the previous question, than, by acceding to the motion, give rise to expectations which the Government had no intentions to satisfy.

Mr. *O'Connell* said, the House was now informed that the Government would do nothing in this matter. The noble Lord was not justified in disparaging the security of the Irish counties. It might be a question whether it was good policy to look to such security, but as to its solvency there could be no doubt. All the public works in Ireland had been executed by means of the same security. The information which the noble Lord had received as to the counties not consenting to the construction of the railroads was not correct. He had reason to believe that most of the counties were prepared to support the undertakings. In most of the counties the grand juries who impose the cess had actually declared their assent. Some counties had made no declaration on the subject; but he believed he could be borne out in stating, that in none had the grand juries declared against the railroads. If the counties were to be absolutely liable for the cost of construction, the case would be different, and would require greater consideration; but the counties would have a claim upon the revenue of the railroads; and according to the calculations of the intelligent railroad commissioners, there was no probability that the counties would ever be called upon to make good a single shilling. He did not agree with those who thought that Government ought not to have the superintendence of railroads in Ireland. The great evil of the English railroads was, that they were not subject to that superintendence. At present they were mere monopolies, and competition was quite out of the question. The railroads in Ireland, at all events, ought to be under the superintendence of the Government. The noble Lord had referred in terms of approbation to the report of the railroad commissioners; but of what value was that report if it were not acted on? One consequence only had resulted from that report. The commissioners had estimated the rate of profit so low, that private speculators were deterred from having anything to do with railroads. 6 per cent. was the greatest profit which, in the opinion of the commissioners, railroads in Ireland would yield, and every body knew that capitalists would not embark their money in such speculations in the expectation of obtaining no greater return. Lord Morpeth abandoned his plan, not because he was convinced of its impolicy, but because he foresaw that it would meet with such a degree of opposition in that and the other House, as would render it impossible to bring it to a successful issue. In the few observations he had made, he had endeavoured to avoid uttering a single word which was calculated to excite an angry feeling, and under all the circumstances of the case, he would recommend his hon. Friend not to press his motion to a division.

Lord *Eliot* had not intended to question the security of the Irish counties; what he said was, that in the event of the failure of railroads, it would be very inconvenient to come upon the occupier of the land. Grand juries were not the representatives of the rate-payers, and though some of them might have declared in favour of the railroads, he believed a general indisposition to adopt them upon the terms recommended by the hon. Member was manifested throughout the counties. The present Government would fully adopt and carry out the last proposition brought forward by Lord Morpeth in 1841.

Captain *Jones* was convinced that the counties of Ireland would never consent to be taxed by the grand juries in the manner proposed, and that the people would consider such a tax a great grievance.

Mr. *W. S. O'Brien* thought it was as well the duty of the Government as the interest of this country, to assist the people of Ireland in forming railways. This country relied on Ireland for many articles of consumption, and it would, therefore be a positive advantage to bring the remote parts of Ireland, by means of railways, within thirty hours of this metropolis. The whole amount required for the purpose would not be more than 6,000,000*l.* or 7,000,000*l.*, and such a sum, considering the advantages likely to result from its expenditure, ought to be a matter of indifference to the Government.

Mr. *Shaw* in explanation, said, he had not called on his noble Friend to form an opinion and decide officially on the matter. On the contrary, all he had said was to express his hope that his noble Friend would not be premature in forming an opinion in coming to a decision in the absence of proper information.

Sir *R. Peel:* Sir, I inferred from the speech of the hon. Gentleman who made this motion, as well as from the terms of the motion itself, that the object which he had in view was to recommend that the Government should undertake the construction of railways in Ireland at the public expense; and I must say, that throughout his speech, the object of an advance of public money was apparent. As, however, the hon. Gentleman disclaimed any such object, I am bound to give full credit to his disclaimer, but, at the same time, I must say, that I never heard a speech from which it could be inferred more clearly, that the object of the speaker was, that the construction of railways in Ireland should not be left to private speculation, but undertaken at the public charge. When the Speaker interposed, and reminded the hon. Gentleman that the form of his motion was inconsistent with the rules of the House—that unless his object was a grant of money he could not move the House into committee to address the Crown—the hon. Gentleman said that his object was not a grant of money; but certainly the disclaimer of the hon. Gentleman was directly at variance, not only with the motion of the hon. Gentleman, but with the pretexts which the hon. Gentleman put forward in his speech. The motion of the hon. Gentleman was not for an address to the Crown on the part of the House, but that the House should resolve itself into committee for the purpose of preparing an address to her Majesty, a course which can only be pursued when a pecuniary grant is intended to be recommended to the Crown. The form of the motion, therefore, occasioned my doubt, and I certainly thought, both from his motion and his speech, that the object of the hon. Gentleman was a grant of public money. Sir, I fully agree with the hon. Gentlemen opposite, that if party considerations could influence her Majesty's Government, it would be a good party move on our part to concur in any measure, to agree to any proposition, which would be likely to conciliate for us the support of the Irish Members. If, I say, we could be influenced by party considerations, the expenditure of 6,000,000*l.* or 7,000,000*l.* might be a matter of perfect indifference to us; and if the state of our finances were, in short, a matter of utter indifference to us, we might, perhaps, become makers of Irish railways, and expend 7,000,000*l.* or 8,000,000*l.* in that way, with a view to conciliate the valuable support of the Members for Ireland. Not being, however, actuated by party views, we cannot act with such considerations; but still, if I really did believe that an undertaking by the Government to make 540 miles of railway in Ireland would be a substantial and permanent benefit to that country, I do think all my scruples on the subject would be removed. But the question is, would such a course, on the part of the Government, be an advantage to Ireland? Now, Sir, I think that it would not, and that it is best for the interests of Ireland that Irish gentlemen should act in reference to such objects, precisely as we in this country have done; that is, that they should undertake speculations of this kind themselves—if, indeed, they believed that profit would result from them. My opinion, Sir, is that what the hon. Gentlemen opposite ask, would, if given, prove a fatal gift; and I say this, because I am looking at what took place in the Irish Parliament, and the result of the grants which they made. I know that grants of public money were given for the construction of your Grand Canal, your Royal Canal, and your Laggan and Tyrone Navigation, and what was the result? Why, that so far from these undertakings turning out profitable, the contrary was the case. [Mr. *F. French*: These were all private undertakings.] Why, Sir, I myself proposed a grant of 200,000*l.* to enable the works on the Royal Canal to go on, and the Tyrone Navigation was carried on at the public expense. These grants, no doubt, were the result of exaggerated statements as to the existence of extensive and valuable coal and other mines—statements which had never been realised; and what I say is, that if, instead of Government interfering, the matter had been left to private speculation, no money would have been expended until it was proved, beyond all doubt, that not only such advantages did really exist, but that the undertakings would turn out profitable, Sir, my belief is, that an undertaking to construct an extensive system of railways in Ireland would not pay the expense, but, even if it did, what would be the consequence? Why, you would bring together an immense mass of labourers, by the incentive of the advantage to arise from undue exertion; but when the works were finished, and these labourers could find no employment, was it not probable that the evils of Ireland, instead of being mitigated, would be increased? The hon. Member for Roscommon said, that in 1839 I opposed a proposition brought forward by the noble Lord opposite, and I admit that I did so. Sir, what I say is this, that if railways in Ireland can be accomplished with profit, their construction ought to be undertaken upon the principle the railways in this country were undertaken; but if they cannot, then I think they ought not to be undertaken at all, and certainly I greatly doubt the policy of making grants of public money for such objects, even in Ireland. Let us look at the manner in which these undertakings have been carried out in England? Why, will the gentlemen of Ireland not do as was done in this country? Why will they not determine on constructing one line of railway in the first instance, say from Dublin to Cork or Limerick? The Government are perfectly willing to give them all the advantages of Government superintendence. They can have plans and surveys for their line, and undoubtedly the country is peculiarly favourable—possesses great geological facilities for the formation of a railway. But, I ask, are you (the Irish Members) willing that land should be taken for the purposes of railways in Ireland on a different principle from that acted on in England? Are you willing that, instead of insisting on your own valuation, land for these purposes should be taken on the principal adopted in Russia and Prussia? If you are not willing to do this, all I can say is, that even if Government were to accede to your wishes, we should have great difficulty in forcing any bill through Parliament, great difficulty in forcing Irish proprietors to accept, say 25*l.* an acre for their land. If, however, Irish gentlemen are of opinion that their own estimates of the value of land should not be applicable to railways, and are ready to accept the sum which might be determined on by Government commissioners, no doubt that would afford great facilities, as well as prove that they had profited by experience. They might also obtain such powers as would enable them to avoid the evils and embarrassments against which English railway companies have had to contend. But notwithstanding all this, I cannot act on the supposition that the people of Ireland are unable of themselves to undertake the construction of railways, if they make up their mind to forget party divisions and animosities, and apply themselves to such an object in right down earnest. The hon. Gentlemen opposite say they are not able; but did not their speeches show the contrary—that the internal condition of Ireland was prospering, and that both the navigation and agriculture of that country were increasing by means of the national energies. Sir, if this be the case, and I have no doubt it is, why ask the Government for assistance? or why should not Ireland, like England, rely on her own native energies for improvements of this kind? I believe her own energies are fully equal to the accomplishment of railway undertakings; but, if not, why does not Ireland exhibit such a state of peace and tranquillity—such an absence of agitation and disturbance—as will show that capital may be safely vested in that country? If peaceable and tranquil, there could be no doubt that English capital, for which it was now so difficult to find profitable employment, would flow into Ireland. But what is the account given with respect to the Dublin and Kingstown Railway? That is the result of private undertaking, and it shows that there is no ground for the supposition that the people of Ireland are not competent to engage in such speculations. [The right hon. Baronet read a passage from the report of the Railway Commissioners to show that this railway had been successfully managed, and that the persons engaged in it had made many improvements, and displayed a degree of ingenuity highly creditable to Irish talent.] Sir, I recollect that Lord Morpeth proposed a line of railway from Dublin to Cork, to be executed by a grant from Government, and that his proposal met with strenuous opposition from Irish Members. They said it was not fair to select a single line, that it would be better to do nothing unless three were determined on, and that a sum of 2,300,000*l.* should be expended, not on the completion of one, but on the commencement of three lines. It was said that the north and west would complain that the south had been unduly favoured. Now, Sir, I don't despair, taking advantage of the errors which we have committed, having the benefit of Government superintendence—having a new arrangement with the proprietors of land, and having the facilities of public instead of the expense of private legislation—I do not, I say, despair of seeing railway undertakings in Ireland with these advantages, and aided by Irish and English capital, conducted to a useful, if not a profitable and remunerating result. Sir, I deny that the Government are disposed to show any indifference on the subject; but I believe that their aid would be ill-timed, and that their interference would be an impediment instead of an advantage.

The *Speaker* suggested that the formal objection to the motion might be got over by omitting all that part of the motion by which it was proposed to move that the House resolve itself into a committee of the whole House.

Sir *Robert Peel* said, it would be a very dangerous precedent to facilitate the motion by varying the terms. The House of Commons was a very liberal body, and only too apt to involve the Crown in expense. He should himself have a great objection to facilitate the motion by acceding to any alteration in the terms.

Mr. *Wakley* said, there were two questions to be considered, first, whether the proposed railways would in themselves be useful; and secondly, whether public money ought to be advanced. England was intersected in every direction by railways. Had Government lent any assistance towards the construction of those railways? He could not see why, in such a country as Ireland, similar advantages might not be derived from such works as in England, by the application of the surplus funds of the country. Let Ireland be tranquilised, and he would venture to say capital in abundance would flow into the country. It was in the power of the right hon. Baronet to make Ireland happy. It was only necessary to act towards her with justice. Let the two countries be placed on the same footing, and the same happy state of things that existed in England would be quickly established in Ireland likewise.

Lord *J. Russell* said, that before the motion was withdrawn, he was anxious to say two or three words on the motion itself, and on others of a similar nature. He did not object to the declaration of the Ministers of the Crown, that railways ought not to be constructed at the public expense, and he did not think that Government ought to be pressed to do so, even if the forms of the House would permit such a course. But he did not mean to say that it would be perfectly fair to say that Government might not at some future time undertake, by a public grant, to contribute towards the construction of railways in Ireland. He thought there were sufficient grounds at the time to justify Lord Morpeth in bringing forward his motion on this subject. It might not be proper at the present time to do so, but it did not follow that such a course might not be perfectly expedient at some future time. It was easier, however, at all times for a Member bringing forward a case to show reasons why the House of Commons should be generous, than it was for a Minister of the Crown to show reasons why any particular grant ought not to be made. Ministers had to consider, not merely separate cases, but the whole question as to how the public purse might best be applied for the general benefit of the country. On that account, he thought the House of Commons should show more disinclination than it had done of late years to entertain individual applications for an expenditure of public money. The argument told, not only against the present motion, but against others which had at no very distant period been submitted to the consideration of the House of Commons. He would only refer to a motion that had been brought forward in these terms:—

> "That an humble address be presented to her Majesty, praying that her Majesty will be graciously pleased to take into consideration the deficiency which exists in the number of places of worship belonging to the Established Church, when compared with the increased and increasing population of the country, the inadequate provision therein for the accommodation of the poorer classes in large towns, and the insufficient endowment thereof in other places, as such facts have been severally set forth in the reports of the late Ecclesiastical Commissioners; to assure her Majesty that this House is deeply impressed with a just sense of the many blessings which this country, by the favour of Divine Providence, has long enjoyed, and with the conviction that the religious and moral habits of the people are the most sure and firm foundation of national prosperity; to state to her Majesty the opinion of this House, that no altered distribution of the revenues of the Established Church could remove the existing and augmenting evil arising from the notorious fact, that an addition of more than six million souls has been made to the population of England and Wales since the commencement of the present century, and that the rate of this increase is rapidly progressive; that the grants made by the wisdom of Parliament, on the recommendation of the Crown, in 1818 and 1824, have been inadequate to supply the national wants; and that, though private and local liberality has been largely manifested in aid of particular districts, the greatest wants exist where there are the least means to meet and relieve them: to assure her Majesty that this House, feeling that God has intrusted to this nation unexampled resources, is satisfied that it is the duty of the Government to employ an adequate portion of the wealth of the nation to relieve the spiritual destitution of large masses of the people, by whose labour that wealth has been enlarged; and humbly to represent to her Majesty that this House will cheerfully make good such measures as her Majesty may be pleased to recommend, in order to provide for her people in England and Wales further and full means of religious worship and instruction in the Established Church."

This motion was negatived only by a majority of 168 against 149. Yet, if carried, it must have led to a great increased expenditure, and to an increase of the taxes for the purpose of carrying out the objects of this single motion. He was glad that a line had been taken that night to discourage such applications. By adhering to a principle of just economy, they would most effectually prevent the necessity of increasing the burdens on the people.

Mr. *Powell* said, that the hon. Member for Finsbury, when he talked of the surplus funds of Ireland, ought to remember that the owners of Irish property did not reside in the country, but for the most part spent their revenues in England.

Motion withdrawn.

LAW OF COPYRIGHT.] Viscount *Mahon* said, that in asking for leave to bring in a bill to amend the law of copyright, it was not his intention to raise a discussion. The subject had been frequently before the House, and he would, therefore, only state in a very few words the nature of the alterations which it was his intention to propose. Sergeant Talfourd proposed to extend the protection of copyright to sixty years. It was his (Lord Mahon's) intention to reduce the period to twenty-five years, and he would introduce a clause to prevent the suppression of valuable works by the representatives of a deceased author, by giving the power to a committee of the Privy Council to interfere to prevent such a suppression.

Mr. *Wakley* said, he should not oppose the present motion of the noble Lord. It had not, however, been proved that an extension of twenty-five years might not be just as objectionable as an extension of sixty years. He hoped the noble Lord would be prepared to show some good reason why the author of a book was entitled to more protection than the author of a new invention, and if sufficient reason for such a preference could not be shown, he hoped the noble Lord would be unsuccessful in his attempt.

Mr. *Jervis* said, he hoped the noble Lord would not proceed farther with his bill till after Easter.

Lord *Mahon* would not pledge himself so far, but he would give sufficient notice of the next stage.

Leave given.

INTERNAL NAVIGATION IN IRELAND.] Lord *Eliot* moved for leave to bring in a bill to amend the act 1 and 2 Will. 4th., empowering landed proprietors in Ireland to sink, embank, and remove obstructions in rivers. There was a general bill in preparation, but the details would occupy a considerable time, and it had therefore been thought proper to introduce a bill to provide a remedy for some particular defects that required correction.

Leave given. Bill brought in, and read a first time.

House adjourned.

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